

ISLAMIC ECOLOGICAL THEOLOGY

RECEP ARDOGAN



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YAYINLARI

ISLAMIC ECOLOGICAL THEOLOGY

THE BASICS OF THE ECOLOGICAL APPROACH
IN THE MUSLIM SOCIAL THEOLOGY

Recep ARDOĞAN



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ISLAMIC ECOLOGICAL THEOLOGY
The Basics of The Ecological Approach in
The Muslim Social Theology

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"The seven heavens and the earth and all who dwell therein glorify Him. There is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His praise; but you do not understand their glorification. Truly, He is forbearing and most forgiving." (al-Isrâ 17/44.)

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PREFACE

As a result of the various dimensions of environmental problems threatening life in the world and the future of humanity, people have become aware of these issues and begun to seek various solutions. Among these solutions, it is important to improve technologies that pollute and harm the environment, ensure recycling of waste, promote the use of renewable energy, and develop new environmentally friendly technologies. But even more crucial is adopting an environmental ethics that motivates individuals to be environmentally conscious. The fact that the mistakes individuals make in their relationship with nature affect others, and furthermore, that future generations will suffer significant harm from this, highlights the ethical aspect of human-environment relationships. However, even more importantly, to identify the problems in the understanding of existence, nature, life, humanity, and society that lead to environmental issues and to develop an ecological perspective. This new perspective should not aim to fit humanity into new molds that are shared feature of different ideologies. This book is written to present the belief, understanding, and value system underlying the basics of environmental issues and solutions, and to develop an ecological theology from an Islamic perspective.

In the introduction section of the book, an attempt has been made to determine the scientific position of the subject and with which issues it concern in kalam (Muslim theology). In this context, brief information is provided about what ecology, ecological theology, and Islamical social theology are and their content.

In the first chapter, the evaluations regarding the intellectual roots of environmental issues in Western thought have been explained, and an attempt has been made to determine the righteousness and consistency of these evaluations.

In the second chapter, within the framework of the belief in creation in Islam, the understanding of existence, order, nature, life, hu-

man, and fitrah (innate spirituality and humanity) along with their intellectual implications, have been clarified.

Extending from this, the third chapter has delved into the value of vitality and biodiversity of in nature from an Islamic perspective.

In the fourth chapter, the position of human being in the pyramid of existence is discussed. Besides, it has been emphasized that the potentials, diverse talents, and rights bestowed by God is equally balanced with responsibilities in terms of Haqq (a name of God that means truth and right).

In the fifth chapter, which focuses on human responsibility, the religious and moral concepts that guide humans towards preserving the order in nature and respecting the rights of non-human species has been discussed. More precisely, the ethical implications of religious concepts and practices have been addressed in this context.

Recep ARDOGAN
Kahramanmaras 2023

INTRODUCTION

1. THE ISSUE IN DIFFERENT ASPECTS

Everything in the universe, from the structure of an atom to stars and galaxies, is in a unique design. The proportionality and harmony, order and continuity, extending from a cell to all the flora and fauna of the world, is admirable. When human beings are born, they open their eyes to a natural environment where they can meet their innate needs and develop their spiritual potential. However, mankind has produced technologies that have unnaturally changed the way of life of living things, including himself. With its effects on the environment, it has begun to cause a change in the structure of the planet on which it lives. As a result of this, problems have emerged in the natural environment, environmental pollution and deterioration in the ecological balance have occurred. These problems, which have reached the dimensions that cannot be ignored, can be briefly listed as follows:

- Reaching of industrial wastes to levels that threaten the environmental health and even the life of individuals directly,
- Climate change and global warming,
- beginning of glaciers to melt,
- desertification and deforestation,
- soil erosion,
- pollution of water resources and decreasing in drinking water resources,
- the air pollution,
- extinction of living species, each of which has certain functions in the natural order
- the problem of hunger and drought in third world countries,

- Disproportionate distribution of human population to the planet, overpopulation in metropolises...

All these conditions require to consider human-environment relations with scientific and intellectual, philosophical and moral dimensions.

One of the reasons for the phenomenon of stress and depression, which is becoming more and more widespread in our age, is that the physical environment begins to take on an unsuitable quality for human innate characteristics. Today, it may be seen that mental depression is more common as you go from rural areas to cities.¹ Because, human beings can be a healthy whole in an environment where all their talents flourish in a balanced way. Therefore, they should realize their existence by preserving their harmony with the environment and making positive effects on their environment.

Today, these problems that pose a serious threat to human life require addressing this issue from a theological point of view. Because belief plays a role in man's relations not only with God, but also with the society in which he lives and with his natural environment. Nature and human-environment relations are one of the important issues of our age. Nature is the subject of social theology in terms of coming to the realm of existence, it's existential value, it's finality and order. In this regard, the approaches and principles presented by the science of social theology will enable to describe the reasonable and ethical character of human-environment relations.

To find a solution to a problem, first of all, it is necessary to diagnose the problem and identify its source. Because *the source of a problem* is also *the source of inspiration for the solution*. Therefore, various causes of environmental problems and their effects should be determined accurately. The mentality dimension of the problem is

¹ The relationships between the natural environment and human psychology have become the subject of independent research today under the names "*Ecological Psychology*," "*Green Psychology*," and "*Ecopsychology*." For instance, refer to Metzner, Ralph, *The Expansion of Consciousness [Book One of The Ecology of Consciousness Series]*, Revised Edition Paperback, Regent Press, 2015.

more important. The belief and understanding that is the source of the problem causes that problem to become chronic. Also, the mentality and intellectual foundations of environmental problems are like this. Almost like a tumor in the brain, it disrupts the entire structure and weakens the mind. For this reason, it is inevitable to criticize the way of understanding and world views on the basis of environmental pollution and deterioration in the ecological order, which is an important problem of today's civilization. This critical review will shed light on the meaning of existence and life for a sustainable world. Therefore, the nature-understanding and human-nature relations underlying environmental problems and solutions should be examined in terms of theology. Environmental philosophy and environmental ethics should be considered as a subtitle of theology; an ecology word should be included.

In this book, the viewpoint of Islam on the natural environment and human-nature relations will be discussed on the basis of beliefs and principles. In other words, in the context of ecological balance and environmental problems, the theology related to the nature and environmental ethics, that is, "Islamic ecological theology (Islamic ecotheology)" will be revealed. Because religions, especially Islam, philosophical teachings and Islamic theology, have different approaches and explanations about existence and value, matter and spirituality, nature and the meaning of life, etc. Without considering all these, efforts to understand the intellectual sources of environmental problems and to establish a competent environmental ethics will be incomplete.

The foundations of the ecological approach and environmental ethics in Islam are one of the main themes of Islamic social theology.

We define social theology a new discipline within the science of kalam. It is a discipline where the ilm al-kalam is associated with social sciences and is updated at the point of problems, interlocutors and solutions.

Moral thinking precedes moral practices. The belief and the world view also precedes the idea of morality. Therefore, for a moral thought which deals with human-nature relations, the ontological,

epistemological and axiological foundations on which it is based must be determined correctly. This requires an "*ecological theology* (علم (الكلام البيئي)" as one of the main topics in "*social kalam* (علم (الكلام الاجتماعي)".

Here, we will try to reveal the purpose, subject and methods of ecological kalam (environmental Muslim theology) by dealing with the concepts related to it.

2. DEFINITION, PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF THE ECOLOGICAL KALAM

Today, it is said that we are in the transition phase to an “ecological age” symbolized by an ecological worldview and that the scientific and intellectual foundations of this transition have been revealed by natural sciences, social sciences, philosophy and religious thought.² So, which concepts and principles, which mindset and set of values should determine the approach of Muslims to this field in our time when the importance of ecology philosophies and environmental ethics is increasing day by day? We call the discipline that should address this issue as “ecological kalam (Muslim theology)”. Ecological kalam is a part of "social kalam", i.e. a sub-science in social kalam.

Here, the question may come to mind to what extent it is correct for the science of kalam to deal with environmental philosophy and environmental ethics. The answer to this question will be set forth below by explaining what "ilm al-kalam (Islamic theology)", "the social kalam" and "the ecological kalam" are.

2.1. KALAM (ISLAMIC THEOLOGY)

Kalam (Islamic theology) is the science that deals with God, the universe, man and society in terms of their relationship with God, based on evidences deduced from scripture [al-naql] and reason [al-aql]. It determines **the Islamic creed and the foundations of the lifestyle and civilization associated with the creed. The first of these (creed) is the subject of systematic theology, while the second is the subject of social theology.**

However, in the contemporary world where people meet new problems in the field of belief and mentality and seek answers to new

questions, one of the functions of kalam is to deal with the philosophical aspect of these problems with a new perspective (with its own method). That is, to identify the Islamic understanding and principles related with the existence, life, nature, human being and civilization. In order for it to fulfill this function in a systematic way, it is necessary to reveal the social kalam as a sub-discipline of Islamic theology.

Even if the understanding of existence, life, nature, human and society changes with various other factors, in other words, even if practice exceeds theory, the theoretical ground of practice is built very quickly. Otherwise, practice cannot find a permanent place and way for itself. Therefore, every practice and every social phenomenon needs to be based on a theory or belief. For this reason, it is extremely important to criticize and deconstruct the existing mentality in order to change it. There are some practices in the background of environmental pollution and deterioration in the ecological order, which is an important problem of today's civilization. In the background of these practices, there is a certain belief and worldview, an understanding and mentality about the world and life. Because belief plays a role in man's relations not only with God, but also with the society in which he lives and with his natural environment. It is very important to criticize this belief, mentality and worldview for a livable world. For this reason, it is inevitable to look at the subject in terms of theology and to shed light on the origin of existence, the meaning of life, and to reveal an ecological kalam, aspect in particular.

Ecological kalam, in our opinion, is a part of social kalam, which, is a sub-discipline of kalam that is one of the Islamic sciences. So what is the social kalam?

2.2. SOCIAL KALAM

The science of kalam is not just about determining the creed by nass, linguistics, reasoning and inference methods, explaining its proofs, and answering questions about Islamic belief. At the same

² Metzner, "*Age of Ecology*," 4-7.

time, it explained how the Islamic faith presents a view of human being, existence, life and society; It determines how the Islamic faith directs science and technology. Besides, it establishes and should establish the Muslim mentality and paradigm on that will be base principles in the relations with the creator of man, his own existence, society and natural environment. This makes it necessary to create a new discipline within the science of kalam, that is, the Islamic social theology (i.e. science of social kalam).

Social Kalam (Islamic social theology), is the studying, in a multifaceted relationship (involving receiving, perception, interpreting and criticizing) with social sciences, how theology dealing with God's attributes reflects and ramificates as the set of principles and values to the human and social field.

Social kalam deals with how Islam, as a set of beliefs, mentalities and values, should reflect on life and society, civilization and politics on the basis of foundations and principles. It clarifies what kind of mentality and social structure the Islamic creed leads to building. It deals with “nature in terms of existence, purposefulness and order”

Social theology approaches contemporary belief problems that are reflected in the field of social sciences from the point of view of kalam. On the one hand, it receives and uses the data revealed by social sciences, and on the other hand, it answers the theories and fictions emerging in this field and contradicting the Islamic belief in terms of theology. While doing both, it reels a critical approach. In this context, it questions, from the perspective of truth, the dogmatic character of the fictions and theories opposed to Islam. However, it does not reduce the divine to the anthropic; nor does theology reduce to sociology and history. Detailed information about it can be found in our book "*Temelden Topluma -Kelam İlminde Sosyal Açılımlar- [From Fundamentals to Society -Social Expansions in the Science of Kalam-]*" (klm publications, Istanbul 2016).

One of the purposes of Social Theology is to determine what

kind of human understanding the theology reveals. Because, every definition of Almighty Allah (j.j.)³ actually points to a definition of man himself. It would be helpful to give an example here. The fact that Allah is the owner of all property and sovereignty means that man is not the ultimate and absolute owner of property, and that he should see his possibilities as a trust. Determining the consequences of the creed regarding human understanding includes references that determine how human-nature relations should be. For example, between to see man as having absolute property and to see him as a trustee/bailee are fundamentally different in terms of guiding these relations. This last issue is the subject of ecological kalam.

Also, responding to the ideologies and social theories of the age in terms of philosophical foundations is a fundamental aim of social theology. Islamic sciences cannot be uninterested to ideas which has reshaped humanity, nature, and our world of meanings and values likes following:

- **Individualism**, which conceives the individual as isolated from society and regards individual freedom as the ultimate value

- **Marxism**, which denies the freedom of the individual and proposes an utopical social order to ensure absolute equality between individuals

- **Deep ecology**, which asserts the equivalence of beings in nature, but eventually result in seeing other people as pests of nature.

- **Social ecology**, which has emerged as the ecological form of anarchism.

It is a necessity to inquire these teachings in terms of Islamic principles, values and norms. In this inquiry, each science of Islam will have contributions within its own subject and methods. However, on the most basic; It is seen that these teachings are based on certain dogmas (i.e. presuppositions), have certain ontology, epistemology and ethics, as in the example of Marxism, which sets out with a fictional history. This shows that the science of kalam has a historical

³ Jalla jalāluḥ: May He be glorified.

role to fulfill. It should deal the question how religious values, beliefs and principles will guide and evaluate the cultural elements and values of societies in our age, as an essential issue. Therefore, ecology should be considered as a sub-title of "social theology" and an "ecological kalam" must be put forward in its.

In this context, criticizing the philosophical teachings (for examples social ecology, deep ecology, ethics of soil, liberal environmentalism) in the field of ecology is also a function of social kalam. This function requires putting forward an "ecological kalam". So what is ecological kalam?

2.3. ECOLOGICAL THEOLOGY

Ecological theology (Muslim ecotheology) is a theological approach to the search for solutions to environmental problems by questioning its intellectual foundations; It is a theological study about the understanding of nature and human-nature relations. It is to investigate how people's approach to the natural environment and the beliefs and acceptances underlying the way they understand nature can be evaluated in terms of Islam.

Social theology tends to interpret the believer who keeps the divine moral consciousness alive in his mind.⁴ Like this, ecological kalam, also tries to reveal how the consciousness of the individual about God and His relations with the world leads him to interpret human-nature relations.

Ecological kalam examines the mental foundations of today's environmental problems, namely the theological and philosophical roots, evaluates different understandings of nature and forms of relationship with nature in terms of epistemic accuracy and ethical justification, and reveals conclusions and judgments that reference moral obligations.

Ecological kalam seeks answers to the following questions:

- What is the meaning of being human and are it's references in terms of approaching towards nature?
- Does existence precede the essence? Is there a human innate purpose of life?
- According to his existential purpose or his innate essence requires in which manner his relations should be with his environment?
- Is there a value pyramid (hierarchy) among assets? Which of the theocentric, biocentric, ecocentric and anthropocentric approaches is the most correct and realistic?

⁴ Düzgün, *Sosyal Teoloji [Social Theology]*, 5.

We can define ecological kalam as follows: **The discipline that studies the nature understanding and human-nature relations from the Islamic theological point of view.**

The phrase "*nature understanding*" in the definition limits ecological kalam to some subheadings of Islamic theology. He states that he will deal with questions such as how the world came into existence, what kind of process works in the world, what is the source of the order in it, whether there is a purposefulness and perfect order or evils in the nature.

The phrase "human-nature relationships" also indicates that ecological theology is a part of social theology. Theology does not merely examine human-nature relationships historically or as studied in human ecology. Instead, it provides an explanation of nature, humanity, and the meaning of life, offering speculative propositions about how different understandings in this regard may reflect upon society and human-nature relationships.

The phrase "*theological*" should not only be understood as a discipline that presents Allah's attributes through texts revealed by God (jalla jalaluh), logical propositions and reasoning, but also as a discipline that also encompasses a broader wisdom, humanitarian cognitions, and spiritual knowledge that delves into the nature of human relationships with the universe. This includes contemplating the quality of human interaction with the world, the meaning of human life and existence, ethics, and values. In other words, Ecological Theology investigates the interaction between ecological values such as sustainability, biodiversity, natural life, and the concepts of "knowledge for power" and "dominion over nature."

Just as social theology focuses on interpreting the "God awareness" that keeps the believer's mind alive,⁵ ecological theology aims to reveal how an individual's consciousness of God and His relationship with the universe directs their interpretation of human-nature relationships.

⁵ Düzgün, *Sosyal Teoloji [Social Theology]*, 5.

Ecological kalam has some features:

First of all, in terms of being included in the social theology that is a sub-discipline of kalam, ecological kalam also includes revelation as well as reason and senses among the sources of information. In this respect, it differs from environmental philosophy.

Secondly, Just as social theology approaches a subject as a multi-variable equation, ecological theology also treats the relationship between Islam and ecology as a double-variable equation. It investigates not only what ecological philosophies are but also their validity. In Islam, it seeks to determine the foundations and dimensions of an ecological perspective based on verses and the approaches and opinions of Islamic scholars.

Thirdly, it aims to identify and defend the principles of Islam on the understanding of nature and on attitude of Muslim mind to human-nature relations based on foundations and evidence.

It is based on the answers to questions such as how the universe came into existence, what kind of process works in the nature, what is the source of order in it, whether evil and chaos or order and purposefulness dominate in nature.

It offers an explanation about the meaning of existence, nature, man and life. Just as social theology attempts to explain and interpret the inner world and personality of the believer who keeps "the God consciousness" alive in his mind, ecological theology also tries to reveal how "the God consciousness" leads the individual to grasp human being - nature relations.

Ecological theology puts forward "principleI" propositions about the reflections of different religious or metaphysical understandings on society and human-nature relations. Evaluates different understandings of nature and forms of relationship with nature in terms of accuracy and righteousness.

Fourthly, as a fundamental topic within social theology, ecological theology does not neglect the connection between environmental problems and mindset foundations of humanity's major challenges and of social problems.

2.3.1. Ecology

In its general context, ecology studies living organisms in terms of their relations to natural environment and to other organisms. To put it more clearly, ecology is a branch of biology that deals the life of organisms in harmony with both the environment in which they live and the network of relationships in this environment.

2.3.2. Ecosystem (Ecological System)

It would be useful to briefly explain the concept of ecosystem, which is closely related to ecology. An ecosystem refers to a complex and interconnected system where all living organisms, interact with each other and their physical environment. This interaction involves the exchange of nutrients, energy, and other resources, resulting in a delicate balance that sustains life.

Ecosystem; it is the biological system (such as forest ecosystem, lake ecosystem) formed by all living beings and non-living beings in an area and their mutual relations. Briefly, while ecosystem expresses the whole of the living and non-living environment (complex but in order), ecology is a natural science dealing a ecosystem. Ecology explains the relations of the elements in a whole ecosystem with each other and with their environment, and how the order in the whole is realized.

It should be underlined here that the ecosystem has two elements:

1. Living beings (including plants, animals, microorganisms, and humans), non-living things, and the network of relations between them, that is, the universe of being and becoming of ecosystem. That is as if a hardware and processes of an ecosystem.

2. A set of rules that ensure the balance, harmony and order and continuity between them. It's like the software of an ecosystem.

As will be explained later, the Quran links this latter to the general law of justice (al-mīzān) determined by Allah for nature and society. This set of rules is the basis that requires human effort to un-

derstand, awareness and morality.

To explain with an example, there are three elements studied in the human ecology:

- Human being (individual, group, society) and its environment (natural and artificial environment).
- The relationships and processes between these entities.
- The laws of balance and order of these relations and processes.

The Quran makes connect between this third and the general law of justice (Mīzān) that Allah has set for nature and society. Mīzān encompasses both natural laws and laws of faith and morality. The former ensures the preservation and continuity of order in nature. The latter guides humans, as free yet responsible beings capable of choosing between good and evil, in their relationships with all beings.

An ecologist is a person who observes and examines the place of beings and the order of relations in such an ecosystem. Accordingly, it deals with the relations of people with the environment in which they live, realize their existence and form a part of.

An environmentalist is an individual who researches, interprets, and evaluates, both on the basis of knowledge and ideas, how humans should interact with the environment. They make inferences on how the ideal human-nature relationships is, aiming to determine how humans can live ensuring ecological sustainability.

1. INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

When we look at today's philosophy of ecology and environmental ethics literature, it is seen that those responsible for the mentality at the root of the environmental problems that humanity faces can be summarized in 3 items:

- Scientists and thinkers such as Descartes, Bacon, Newton;
- Plato and the Neo-Platonism doctrine;
- Judeo-Christian tradition.

These errors are expressed as follows:

- The distinction between thought and space, spirit and matter, the realm of ideas and the realm of phenomena.

"The Cartesian division between mind and matter has had a profound effect on Western thought. It has taught us to be aware of ourselves as isolated egos existing "inside" our bodies [...]"¹

- Based on this (the superiority of the former over the latter), the approach that sees knowledge as a tool of domination.
- Mechanical universe understanding,
- Belief in the superiority and priority of man over nature.

Contrary to these claims, the separation of spirit and matter is not the cause of environmental problems, but rather the discovery and determination of the truth. In fact, man is in nature, but he has fundamentally different characteristics from other living things in nature. Man's way of life is completely different from wild life. An attitude

¹ Capra, *The Turning Point*, 59,

contrary to this truth is an obstacle to the civil-humanitarian life. This obstacle causes people to be unable to limit their relations with nature to civil and moral concepts, and ultimately to harm both nature and their own life.

The mechanical conception of the universe and the paradigm that sees knowledge as a means of domination over nature and other societies has an important place among the intellectual and philosophical foundations of environmental problems.

1.1. SEEING KNOWLEDGE AS A TOOL OF DOMINATION

One of the dynamics of the mentality transformation that brings environmental problems of our age is the modern understanding of science.

Before Galileo, Descartes, Bacon, and Newton, the ends of science were wisdom, i.e. to give meaning to life with spiritual values and to establish humane and moral values as the foundation of existence. In other words, science served to understand the order in nature by observing and contemplating nature. Religion directed people to live a life in accordance with the fitrah (the innate spiritual characteristic of human beings) and to rebuild the earth without harming this order.

"Since Bacon, the goal of science has been knowledge that can be used to dominate and control nature, and today both science and technology are used predominantly for purposes that are profoundly anti-ecological."²

In Bacon's famous third aphorism it says:

² Capra, *The Turning Point*, 54.

"Knowledge and human power are synonymous, since the ignorance of the cause frustrates the effect; for nature is only subdued by submission [...]"³

Bacon's understanding of nature, which has secrets that must be obtained by torturing him, reminds us of the widespread torture of women in the 17th century witch courts in England. Already, with Francis Bacon, there was a transition from the "science of wisdom" to the "science of power and domination". On this subject, Seyyed Hossein Nasr makes the following assessment:

"He [i.e. Modern man] turns his gaze to the Book of Genesis and the rest of the Bible as the source of the crisis rather than looking upon the gradual de-sacralization of the cosmos which took place in the West and especially the rationalism and humanism of the Renaissance which made possible the Scientific Revolution and the creation of a science whose function, according to Francis Bacon, one of its leading proponents, was to gain power over nature, dominate her and force her to reveal her secrets not for the glory of God but for the sake of gaining worldly power and wealth."⁴

1.2. MECHANICAL UNIVERSE VISION

With the birth of Newtonian science, nature was constructed as a mechanical system that could be operated and exploited." Today, "Our science and technology are based on the belief that an understanding of nature implies domination of nature by man."⁵

From the 18th century, science in the West broke away from holistic understanding. It has tended to use nature for the control and

³ Bacon, Francis, *Novum Organum*, 11.

⁴ Nasr, *Man And Nature*, 6.

⁵ Capra, "Deep Ecology", 23.

benefit of capitalists and to produce knowledge that can be used for exploitation. This was true not only in the fields of physico-mechanics and engineering, but also in medicine, psychology, sociology, communication and politics. Science was produced not only to dominate nature, but also to exploit man. It was not concerned with building any responsibility and moral order.

The new paradigm of science, rooted in Bacon, "proceeded to replace the organic view of nature with the metaphor of the world as a machine."⁶ According to Francis Bacon, the function of science was "to gain power over nature, dominate her and force her to reveal her secrets not for knowing and realizing "the glory of God but for gaining worldly power and wealth".⁷

As stated by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, contemporary man now sees nature as a prostitute, not a respectable wife from whom he benefits, but for whom he is also responsible, but a prostitute with no sense of obligation and responsibility toward herself... Here is the difficulty: the condition of nature being "used" like a prostitute makes it impossible to be amused and enjoyed more and more each day by it.⁸

The fact that the nature was seen as a mechanical being, and that human beings were imprisoned in "the power struggle" against nature, away from wisdom and morality, spread to other areas as well. The will to power and the struggle for power turned an ideological foundation. Capra makes the following reminder about this:

"The emphasis on struggle in Marx's theory of historical evolution paralleled Darwin's emphasis on struggle in biological evolution. In fact Marx's favorite image of himself is said to have been that of "the Darwin of sociology." The idea of life as an ongoing struggle for existence, which both Darwin and Marx owed to the economist Thomas Malthus, was vigorously promoted in the nine-

⁶ Capra, *The Turning Point*, 56.

⁷ Nasr, *Man and Nature*, 6.

⁸ Nasr, *Man and Nature*, 18.

teenth century by the Social Darwinists, who influenced, if not Marx, certainly many of his followers"⁹

Also, on the basis of deism, seeing the universe as a perfect clock that works by itself is an important reason for environmental problems. Because, approaching the beings in nature as a renewable part of a machine will lead to irresponsibility and insensitivity.

1.3. PLACING THE UNIVERSE IN SIMPLE AND STRICT DETERMINISM

Placing the universe in a uniform, simple and absolute determinism leads to a significant deviation. This deviation is to think that all the flows and processes in the universe can be explained in a way that can be formulated using scientific methods. However, discovering the workings of a being in nature is an intricate and complex task incomparable with drawing a machine. Besides, natural events do not occur with a mechanical necessity; they do not continue in absolute determinism.

On the other hand, to be able to talk about environmental ethics requires firstly removing human from determinism and giving up explaining the universe with absolute determinism. Because free will is the condition of virtue. For an action to have a moral meaning, and a religious value (a charity, and a worship acceptable by God), it must be chosen consciously and voluntarily, and it must go beyond determinism.

⁹ Capra, *The Turning Point*, 34.

1.4. TO REGARD TODAY'S SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE AS ABSOLUTE AND UNCHANGEABLE

The emergence of an absolute (incautious) trust in science has led people to use the information and technologies they have reached, without thinking about the consequences.

However, science is a process, scientific knowledge also changes and progresses in the process. Because, science is based on the method of induction; it cannot examine all the elements in the universe of what he is trying to discovery and explain. Ignoring this fact has led to accepting the facts for which science cannot explain their function as dysfunctional. However, the fact that we cannot explain the function of some entities in nature and the relations between them does not mean that they are dysfunctional. Although man is capable of understanding nature and discovering that living things and inanimate beings and the interrelationships between them constitute a system, he cannot know them deeply and comprehensively. In fact, the idea of "conquering nature" is also a utopia (or rather a dystopia). Liberal environmentalism says, "The real resource is the human mind, science and technology." In today this claim is only a remnant of absolute trust to science.

Many different beings in nature, with their special functions and interrelationships, constitute an order that exceeds the human's ability to know and think. The fact that science is still a self-renewing process is clear proof of this. This fact leads to the conclusion that the Creator's knowledge, wisdom, and power... cannot be besieged by human knowledge and God actions are perfect. To act from this conclusion leads to the fact that there is nothing accidental, dysfunctional, useless in nature; gives the principle that the entire universe should be viewed as a living organism.

1.4. FALSE HUMANISM

One of the fundamental causes of environmental problems is false humanism. The (hu)man described by humanism was a male, white, and Western. As a result, Western people, on the one hand, has glorified human, but on the other hand, couldn't see African and Middle Eastern people as human beings. In actually, they idolized their egos.

Therefore, the worldview and movement called humanism has never actually been humanism in the real sense. It is a false humanism. We can clearly see this in "*The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*" (1789), The Manifesto referred to human rights and universality as an expression, but in reality, those who prepared this manifesto did not mean this. Because, when this manifesto was placed at the head of the *French Constitution of 1791*, which was prepared very soon after this declaration, it was decided that the manifesto did not cover the people in the French colonies:

"The French colonies and possessions in Asia, Africa, and America, although constituting part of the French dominion, are not included in the present Constitution."¹⁰

So the people who had these rights were only free citizens of France. Therefore, it can be said that humanism has never been truly humanism just as Nazi environmentalism was an eco-fascism in practice.

Today, post-humanism likewise has some commonalities with fascism, just as The humanism has to some extent partnerships with fascism. Some post-human thinkers also draw attention to the falsity of humanism. According to them, human alone is no longer the focus and criterium of thought, but rather untouched nature and life as a

¹⁰ "The Constitution of 1791", <https://wp.stu.ca/worldhistory/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2015/07/French-Constitution-of-1791.pdf> ;

whole. "The concept of 'the human' is in fact intertwined with things like colonialism, sexism, and racism. While an appeal to our shared humanity may be beautiful in theory, a brief look at history shows a different story. The idea of 'the human' has historically been used to oppress whoever (and whatever) was considered 'nonhuman.'" Therefore "humanism is far from innocent: It comes with the baggage of Western supremacy, patriarchy, and oppression."¹¹ This non-innocence is a result of that it is This non-innocence is a result of that it is a insincere display of humanism, where someone may pretend to care about humanity and human values but actually lacks genuine concern or empathy.

While Western man exploited the natural resources and people of Africa (and the Indian continent), he was also able to ease his conscience by Christianizing them . The mood, emotional state and conceptual world behind this colonialism is the mood and conceptual world that gives rise to environmental problems.

Today, overpopulation (and rapid population growth) sometimes be used to mask world problems caused by the West. Moreover, the idea that drought, poverty, misery, hunger, and epidemics are part of the ecosystem encourages western scholars and thinkers to reveal anti-humanitarian ideas (fascist environmentalism) in the name of 'nature-centrism'. Some of the discourses of radical environmentalists (like the group "Earth First!") are striking examples of this.

In an article written under the pen-name "Miss Ann Trophy"¹², a member¹³ of this radical environmentalist group (i.e. "Earth First!"), it was claimed that the survival of different ecosystems on earth depends on a great decrease in the human population. And, it was emphasized that only AIDS only has the potential to significantly reduce

<https://web.archive.org/web/20111217062556/http://sourcebook.fsc.edu/history/constitutionof1791.html>

¹¹ www.thecollector.com/posthumanism-philosophy-of-the-21st-century/

¹² i.e. MissAnnTrophy --> misanthropic

This pan-name means "who is disliking human" and reflects the post-humanist idea that considers humans only as pests of nature.

the human population without harming other species:

"If radical environmentalists were to invent a disease to bring human population back to ecological sanity, it would probably be something like AIDS. [...] I take it as axiomatic that the only real hope for continuation of diverse ecosystems on this planet is an enormous decline in human population. [...] If, like the Black Death in Europe, AIDS affected one-third of the world's population, it would cause an immediate respite for endangered wildlife on every continent. More significantly, just as the Plague contributed to the demise of feudalism, AIDS has the potential to end industrialism, which is the main force behind the environmental crisis. [...] But one way or another there will be victims of overpopulation -through war, famine, humiliating poverty. as radical environmentalists, we can see AIDS not as a problem, but a necessary solution (one you probably don't want to try for yourself). To paraphrase Voltaire: If the AIDS epidemic didn't exist, radical environmentalists would have to invent one.¹⁴

David Foreman who is one of co-founders of The Movement Of "Earth First!" has described these remarks as an "insensitive comment" and has apologized.¹⁵ Unfortunately, Foreman himself also has similar thoughts about famine stricken Ethiopians. He uttered rather unfortunate statements in "Simple Life" interview:

"The worst thing we could do in Ethiopia was to give aid—the best thing would be to just let nature seek its own balance, to let people there just starve [...] The alternative is that you go in and save these half-dead children who will never live a whole life. Their development will

¹³ Christopher Manes.

¹⁴ Miss Ann Thropy, "Population and AIDS." *Earth First!*, VII/5 (1987), 32.

¹⁵ Ünder, *Çevre Felsefesi [Environmental Philosophy]*, 241.

be stunted. And what's going to happen in ten years' time is that twice as many people will suffer and die."¹⁶

Here, ideas against 'equal humanity' (fascist environmentalism) in the name of 'nature-centrism' are romanticized with the idea that phenomena such as drought, hunger, and epidemics are part of the ecosystem.

These expressions are the tip of the iceberg. Its intellectual background is more terrible. But, more frighteningly, this approach is not unique to one or two environmentalists. These statements, in fact, reveal the fascist mentality in the depths of Western societies. The congruence between Greek shore troops dipped the boats carrying Syrian refugees in water and Hardin's '*lifeboat argument*' is a real atrocity. One is explaining it theoretically, the other is applying it ruthlessly.

According to American biologist Garrett Hardin, who advocates free-market environmentalism, the "supreme good in nature" is "survival." People should mimic nature and consider survival as the ultimate value. However, alongside basic human needs, richness such as sightseeing areas, beaches, hunting, art, and music are also necessary for human life. Selfishness is strong and inherent in human nature, while conscience is weak and inherited from society. As proposed by Malthus, human population increases geometrically, while food supply increases arithmetically. Therefore, the carrying capacity of the world for the human population is limited. Excessive population growth is also the fundamental cause of environmental problems.¹⁷ At this point, Hardin uses the analogy of the lifeboat to address the problem of poverty and immigration. In this analogy, each country lives in boats with limited carrying power:

¹⁶ *Defending the Earth, a Dialog Between Murray Bookchin and Dave Foreman*, ed. Chase, Steve; Woods, Hole, MA, South End Press, 1991, p. 108, 133. <https://ecology.iww.org/texts/SteveOngerth/RedwoodUprising/5>

Foreman wrote that he regretted these statements (David Foreman, "Second Thoughts of an Eco-Warrior", *Defending the Earth*, p. 132.). However, we do not know whether this is a real regret or a step back due to reactions.

¹⁷ Ünder, *Çevre Felsefesi [Environmental Philosophy]*, 216-217.

"First we must acknowledge that each lifeboat is effectively limited in capacity. The land of every nation has a limited carrying capacity. The exact limit is a matter for argument, but the energy crunch is convincing more people every day that we have already exceeded the carrying capacity of the land. We have been living on "capital" — stored petroleum and coal — and soon we must live on income alone."

Since the carrying capacity of the poor people's boats is exceeded, many people in these boats jump into the sea in the hope of being accepted into the boats of the rich. According to Hardin, they should not be taken into the boats of the rich. It is wrong for some in the rich boats to feel guilty for being lucky.¹⁸ Some might object to this approach of Hardin's as follows: "How can you justify slamming the door once you're inside? You say that immigrants should be kept out. But aren't we all immigrants, or the descendants of immigrants? Since we refuse to leave, must we not, as a matter of justice and symmetry, admit all others?" Against this objection, Hardin admits that non-Indian Americans are "descendants of thieves.": "It is literally true that we Americans of non-Indian ancestry are the descendants of thieves."¹⁹ But he asks: "Where would 200 million putatively justice-loving, non-Indian, Americans go? Most of them — in the persons of their ancestors — came from Europe, but they wouldn't be welcomed back there."

Hardin emphasizes that even the law only protects "only recent property rights" and that nothing can be done for people whose lands and resources are usurped.²⁰ According to him, what needs to be done is to close the doors to immigrants and to leave poor societies alone with famine, hunger and misery.²¹

¹⁸ Hardin, "Living On a Lifeboat", 37.

¹⁹ Hardin, "Living On a Lifeboat", 45.

²⁰ Hardin, "Living On a Lifeboat", 46.

²¹ Under, Çevre Felsefesi [*Environmental Philosophy*], 235-237.

Garrett Hardin calculates that in Western countries the population multiplies in 87 years, in some poor countries in 21 years.²² In light of this, he says that peoples of some countries will die whether they receive foreign aid or not. According to Hardin, it is futile to help them or to grieve for their death. The hunger in countries such as Somalia and Ethiopia shows that the population in these countries has exceeded the carrying capacity. In this case, a part of the population that cannot find the necessary food dies and the population falls to the limit of its carrying capacity. This is the rule in nature, and foreign aid means interference in this natural process. (Under, *Environmental Philosophy*, 238-241.) Therefore, the best way is for these countries to control their own population growth. Here is Hardin's suggestion:

How can we help a foreign country to escape overpopulation? Clearly, the worst thing we can do is send food. The child who is saved today becomes a breeder tomorrow. We send food out of compassion; but if we desired to increase the misery in an overpopulated nation, could we find a more effective way for doing so? Atomic bombs would be kinder. For a few moments the misery would be acute, but it would soon come to an end for most of the people, leaving a very few survivors to suffer thereafter. Food-bombs increase the number of survivors to suffer from chronic malnutrition.²³

This discourse reveals the reflection of the fascist paradigm on modern secular environmental rhetoric. The following truth expressed by H. Under on this matter is much sadder:

"Hardin's views are ideas that many environmentalists think when they are 'realistic', but are self-censored because they do not fit well with conventional environ-

²² Hardin, "Living On a Lifeboat", 38.

²³ Hardin, "On the Immorality of Being Soft-Hearted", 17-18.

mental discourse. Hardin articulates these censored views with rare intellectual courage."²⁴

While talking about the power of the ecosystem to carry the human population, it is the Western man of nature who determines the limit according to himself! On the other hand, consumption is very low in poor countries despite high population. In this case, it is more logical advise that the population in 'developed countries where consumption is geometrically increasing' must be significantly reduced. But, we shouldn't advocate this fascist thought.

Sense of justice, ability to believe, and value consciousness. These humanitarian forces balance the natural forces in man, and lead him from destructive attitudes and behaviors to constructive ones. It encourages him to think in moral terms and to act according to principles and value judgments. Therefore, what is in the wild nature and what should be in the human realm are very different. the Quranic concept of "fitrah" emphasizes on this fact, i.e. humanitarian values and human's inner bond to God who is origin of morality.

The idea that refugees and migrants should not be accepted, even if they migrate to developed Western countries for only the sake of survival, is the point where eco-fascism emerges. "*Fascist ecology (eco-fascism)*" is the manifestation of the fascist movement equipped / romanticized with environmental approaches. Its origin is Germany. The roots of "*social Darwinism*" and eco-fascism can be seen in Ernst Heinrich Philipp August Haeckel (1834–1919), who first used the term "*ecology*" and emphasized "*holism*". He and some other scientists have stated that "civilization and the life of nations are governed by the same laws as prevail throughout nature and organic life." Haeckel has established a connection between "the untouched nature" and "racial purity"; they have opposed racial mixing as unnatural. The idea that racial mixing is unnatural is a thought associated with one end being evolutionism and the other end being scientific racism and eco-fascism. Besides, "This notion of 'natural laws' or 'natural order'

²⁴ Under, *Çevre Felsefesi [Environmental Philosophy]*, 215.

has long been a mainstay of reactionary environmental thought. Its concomitant is anti-humanism."²⁵

One of the important figures who paved the way for eco-fascism is Martin Heidegger (1889 - 1976), He rejected anthropocentric humanism, criticized industrial technology for causing pollution, emphasized on "*local place*" and "*homeland*", called humans to "*let things be*" and highlighted the need for humanity to guard and preserve the balance of the whole nature instead of dominating it. Consequently, contemporary deep ecologists have included Heidegger among the pioneers of ecological thought and deep ecology.²⁶

Additionally, the idea of the population in countries experiencing scarcity and needing foreign aids must to be stay in their own homelands contradicts reality: The settling of Western countries in Africa and benefits disproportionately from its resources compared to the Africans.²⁷ For example, there are still countries in Africa that France exploits. Giorgia Meloni (1977 -), who leads the Italian right-wing party Fratelli D'Italia, has said in that issue:

This is called the CFA Franc. It is the colonial currency that France prints for 14 African nations, to which it applies seigniorage (a profit made by issuing currency) and by virtue of which it exploits the resources of these nations. In return, they demand that 50% of everything that Burkina Faso exports ends up in the coffers of the French treasury. The gold that this child goes down a tunnel to extract, mostly ends up in the coffers of the French state,

The gold that this child [in Burkina Faso] goes down a [gold mine] tunnel to extract, mostly ends up in the coffers of the French state.²⁸

²⁵ Staudenmaier, "Fascist Ecology", 14.

²⁶ See as an example: Zimmerman, "*Rethinking the Heidegger*", 195-224.

²⁷ In Turkish, this is referred to as "çökme" and "çöklenme".

²⁸ "*Did the President of Italy attacked Macron and accuse France of exploiting Africans and children?*", <https://verify-sy.com/en/details/9276/Did-the-President->

As Meloni says, the way to end the immigration problem is to putting an end to the exploitation of Africans and allowing them to break free from these exploitative practices. An other interesting point is that this speech was made to justify Italy's non-receivance of a ship carrying hundreds of refugees.

Eco-fascism, while stating that the laws of nature cannot be defied, tends to confine humans within the rules of the wild nature. Again, the idea that "every ethnic group should stay in its own ecological environment" has been used as a justification for xenophobia. However, the West has exploited other people's ecological environments for centuries. To give an example that everyone knows, the American continent was usurped by genocide against the Indians. Then, black-skinned people were enslaved and brought to America by human hunting in Africa to be employed in those lands. Those who exploited Africa and the Indian sub-continent for centuries still continue to exploit it covertly.

In our opinion, ecological approach and environmental ethics are definitely not **post-humanism**.

Posthumanism, rejects humanist thought and criticizes the human-centered foundation that keeps human separate and superior to all natural beings. While humanism assumes that only humans control, constrain, and create change post humanism considers that there are very various interactions between humans and non-humans and that environmental factors affect on human being, society, political order and law. In other words, "the human's ability to act is distributed across a dynamic set of relationships that the human participates in but does not completely intend or control."²⁹

Post humanism opposes the hierarchical classification between mind and body and between humans and non-human entities and the traditional understanding of the value of culture and nature. It aims to

of-Italy-attacked-Macron-and-accuse-France-of-exploiting-Africans-and-children- [date of access: 24.08.2023]

²⁹ Diane - Lehman, "Posthumanism", *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication*, www.oxfordre.com/communication.

shift the exploitation of non-human categories by recognizing the intrinsic value of non-human entities and advocating for more ethical treatment. Thus, it questions the validity of traditional ethical order between the human and the nonhuman beings.

According to the post humanism human has lived and will live in a network of interaction with other beings. The idea of a world that is non-holistic and of humans as isolated individuals and independent life forms is problematic. Besides, the humanist understanding, which sees man as a moral, central entity that dominates nature, leads to the exploitation of non-human categories and even if other humans. Because, the result of narrowing the concept of human is the marginalization of women, immigrants, foreigners, unqualifieds (?) and unevolveds (?) person, those who are not granted citizenship, and the violation of their rights.³⁰

It is true that the activities of the life are partaked by dynamic forces of which the human is in it. However, the acts of only human is autonomous, conscious, intentional, and exceptional, in flow of life in the world. Although we cannot think of it as isolated from nature and society, it has a special status. intelligence, consciousness, different abilities and autonomy make him responsible and one of these responsibilities is to avoid from harming. However, there is no responsibility for other living things in nature. So, it is necessary to accept its difference in order to say that man should away from destructiveness and take his moral responsibility towards nature.

For example, the claim that there is more similarity than difference between the material structure of humans and other beings is a wrong foundation for Post humanism. Because basing the post humanist critiques on the similarity of molecules and cells would mean imprisoning humans in nature's dungeon (corporeality). The result of this approach is to advocate that the rules determining natural/wild life should also apply in society.

While it has some just and right approaches, Post-humanism

³⁰ Koistinen, - Karkulehto, "*Feminizm Bağlamında Posthümanizm*", www.

represents an extreme view in our perception of natural beings and life. It disregards the value of humans and considers them equal to other beings in nature, while denying that it actually places itself at the center of beings. Claiming not to place itself at the center while looking at beings from a self-centered perspective is the main contradiction of post-humanists and some deep ecologists. Describing this discourse as a romantic form of eco-fascism would probably not be far from the truth.

Also, the concept of **transhumanism** points to the alteration of the inherent characteristics (the creation feature, fitrah) of human beings, which are intertwined with nature, through technological means. Therefore, transhumanism implies the unnatural deterioration of human beings, who are in dialogic relations with their fellows, and in interactions with other beings as a necessity of their nature (and fitrah). This approach contradicts the ecological perspective, as well as it goes against the basic moral principle, which we can summarize as "not to ruin and harm".

Presenting an ecological approach that is far from the deviations mentioned above stands before us as a multidimensional problem today. This problem has religious, philosophical (ontological and axiological), moral, legal, political, economic, cultural and technological dimensions. The belief, mentality and moral dimensions of the problem will be discussed below. Belief, conception of existence, values, principles and concepts on which an understanding of nature and environmental ethics are based that will create a solution for environmental problems will be explained with the main lines. The relationship between the set of values that shape the relations of man with nature and the values of Islam will be determined. Creation belief on which ecological approach is based in Islam; The belief foundations of the understanding of existence, life, nature and human will be briefly revealed.

2. UNDERSTANDING OF CREATION IN ISLAM

2.1. CONCEPT OF QADAR

The Arabic word of "qadar" means "measure, quantity; value; assess; power."¹ In the Qur'an, this concept is related to processes in universe. It means that Allah created the universe in a measure and plan, put the beings and occurrences in the universe in perfect balance, harmony and order, and gave specificity, determinacy and continuity to the functioning in nature:

*"...it is He who has created all things and measured them out precisely. (وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَرَهُ تَقْدِيرًا)."*²

*"... He has set a measure for all things."*³

*"We have created everything in due measure."*⁴

The expressions "natural balance" and "naturel order" refer to this delicate measure, adjustment and order in the universe.

From the point of view of Islam, everything that exists is situated within a universal order. Every living being, through its emergence, growth, life, and death, fulfills a necessary purpose for other entities. It is not an easily replaceable part of a cosmic machine. Each component is an essential element of a living whole (the universe) where each part is connected to others and the whole order. This belief in

¹ al-Isfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*, 596.

² 25/Furqān, 2.

³ 65/Talak, 3.

⁴ 54/al-Qamar, 49. See also 80/al-Abasa, 19.

the divine wisdom (al-hikmah al-ilahiyyah) and purposefulness of existence turns all the beings in the universe into reflections, manifestations and appearances (al-tajalliyyāt) the attributes of the Transcendent Absolute Being (God). It adds a distinct meaning and theological value to the natural environment. Therefore, a person who comprehends the wisdom and intention in creation makes it a principle to preserve Allah's plan in creation and the ecological order.

2.1.1. NATURAL ORDER AS A CONDITION OF WILL

According to the concept of qadar in the Qur'an, the order and causality in the universe is the work of divine will and they are manifestations and reflections of Allah's knowledge, power, wisdom and artistry. That is, all beings and becomings are manifestations of freedom, not necessity. Because, the creator is absolutely free and wise. Its freedom is the foundation of freedom, diversity and wealth in nature. Its wisdom is the basis of order, functionality and purposefulness in the universe. If the divine will wishes, it can disrupt the causality in this nature at certain moments (such as miracle and revelation). However, God does not break his custom and way of act ('ādatullāh) unless there is an extraordinary reason (sunnatullāh). On the other hand, divine will has given man reason and conscience in accordance with the wisdom of the divine test; made room for human free will. The arrangement of the existence and the sequence of events in the universe by the Absolute Will and the giving of will to human beings, eliminates absolute determinism and raises the human's relations with the environment to the level of consciousness.

The laws of nature (ādatullāh) emerge when Allah gives order and certainty to the universe. Therefore, people who discover the laws of nature through their mind can consciously direct their behavior. It is also a distinctive potential of human beings to observing of nature, discovering the laws of nature and being able to direct his life according to the relevant information and to use some laws of nature against some others of them.

2.1.2. FREEDOM OF WILL AS A CONDITION OF MORALITY

Being able to talk about environmental ethics requires firstly removing human from the circle of determinism. Because where there is no will and voluntary behavior, there can be no moral behavior. More precisely, involuntary actions cannot be seen as behaviors that deserve moral value judgments. In order for man not to be in the circle of determinism, the universe must not be in absolute determinism. Determinism is not the same as "lawfulness" and "order". There is "lawfulness" in nature. However, the laws in the universe are not absolute and necessary, as Emile Boutroux said, there is a certain "intertwinedness" and "contingency" in the laws of nature. The existence of contingency and indeterminism, as experienced in quantum physics, shows that the laws of nature are not eternal and are the work of will. This will is absolute will.

Boutroux makes the following explanations regarding the will and freedom that human has:

Mankind is not only possessed of a collective freedom: human societies also possess a freedom of their own; and within these societies even individuals dispose of their persons. In a word, the individual is not only the creator of his character, he can also intervene in the events of his life and change their course; every moment he can strengthen his acquired tendencies or endeavor to modify them.

In his relations with the world, man is not a spectator, compelled to maintain things just as they happen of necessity; he can act, set his stamp on matter, make use of the laws of nature to create works that transcend nature.⁵

⁵ Boutroux, *The Contingency of The Laws of Nature*, 172.

The truth is that in the lower worlds law occupies so wide a field that it may almost be substituted for being ; in the higher worlds, on the other hand, being almost causes law to be forgotten. Thus, every fact depends not only on the principle of conservation, but also, and in the first instance, on a principle of creation.

Being, then, at none of its stages, is known in its entirety when the positive sciences have completed their work. Its nature and permanent laws are objects of knowledge; what remains to be known is its creative origin.⁶

Therefore, science will not be able to fully discover the order and laws of nature, especially, if the universe is assumed to be evolving or expanding or enriching. From this point of view, scientific knowledge is not capable of being used to make radical changes on nature. Scientific knowledge is incomplete, open to change; therefore it should be used with caution. The important problems caused by the technologies used until today prove this situation.

2.2. THE CONCEPT OF JAMĀL (AESTHETICS)

*"Nature is divine art."*⁷

Consistency and aesthetics in the universe are reflections of God's "**Jamal (Beauty)**" attribute. In terms of this understanding, ecological balance and aesthetic-diversity in nature are values that must be protected.

Every being in the universe has functions that science have discovered to some extent and are discovering. While they perform their

⁶ Boutroux, *The Contingency of The Laws of Nature*, 160.

⁷ Nursi, *Words*, 733.

functions, they also appeal to people's aesthetic feelings. This aesthetic is for the embellishment of human thought with moral concepts and life with moral principles:

"We have adorned the lowest heaven with the beauty of the planets."⁸

"It is He who has set up for you the stars so that you might be guided by them in the midst of the darkness of land and sea."⁹

"We have placed constellations in heaven and have beautified it for beholders."¹⁰

Islam encourages us to realize the God's beauty (al-Jamal) attribute while we are watching the beauties of nature. This encouragement brings to notice the rhythm in nature and to love bio-diversity (i.e. biological diversity). Considering that together with the diversity in nature, they all form a unity (الوَحْدَةُ فِي عَيْنِ الْكَثْرَةِ), the absence of one of them means that some colors in a painting had been faded. Therefore, it is necessary to respect biodiversity and all living things that are part of it.

This aesthetic sense of realizing that every being in the universe is a manifestation of Allah's Attribute of Jamal, and that each one of them is a carrier of a separate beauty, such as the different lines, curves and colors in a beautiful painting develops the following virtues;

- an optimistic outlook on life,
- an ideal of civilization in harmony with the order in nature,
- a sense of responsibility towards non-human beings as well as humans. A person with this understanding does not only establish beneficial relations with the beings around him, but also seeks to establish aesthetic relations; ascribe aesthetic value to the assets in nature. This is the first step to protect and enrich the aesthetic diversity

⁸ 37/al-Saffāt, 6.

⁹ 6/al-En'ām, 97.

¹⁰ 15/al-Hijr, 16.

in nature.

2.3. CONCEPT OF THE DIVINE WISDOM

All schools of kalam unite when both Allah's actions and commands are good and Allah has the "wisdom (al-Hikmah)" attribute, and when none of His orders and actions are absurd and unwise, useless and meaningless.

Mu'tazila and most Maturidis emphasize that it is not worthy of Allah's majesty that actions are not related to a wisdom and a cause.

Allah's mercy and grace is the basis of his actions to be directed to a wisdom and desired purpose. As a matter of fact, the Qur'an explains creation and order with the preposition of causality (lam al-ta'lil, لَ):

*"He has set up on the earth firm mountains, lest it shake under you, and rivers and tracks, so that you may find your way, and He has set up other landmarks. By these and by the stars people set their course."*¹¹

*"We have placed constellations in heaven and have beautified it for beholders..."*¹²

Allah has connected the causes to its results "shar'an (شَرْعاً; in the field of laws and religious commands)" and "qadaran (قَدَرًا; in the field of existential order, i.e. ontological)".¹³

The shar'an cause-effect relationship (al-illiyah al-shar'iyyah) is that divine decrees have a cause and they are explained as "illah". The "illah" is in a sense a "final cause" that may be named as "proximate cause" enabling comparison and analogy. There is also a "fundamental reason" in the provisions and they are called "(al-hikmah)". Wis-

¹¹ 16/al-Nahl, 16.

¹² 15/al-Hijr, 16.

¹³ Izmirli, *Yeni İlm-i Kelam [The New Muslim Theology]*, p. 283, 284.

dom has a generality that is linked to God's purposes in sending the divine book and establishing religion (maqasid al-shari'a, al-maqasid al-shar'iyyah). Furthermore, a single ruling may have multiple wisdoms.

Wisdom (al-hikmah al-ilahiyyah, divine wisdom), according to our perspective, signifies the goodness behind religious decrees, in other words, the good that God intends when establishing religious norms. The practical normative provisions of Islam have a reason called "gaye (al-maqsad)". This is the supreme purpose of God's process of decreeing. Wisdom precedes ontologically but comes later in terms of actual occurrence in the world. Because this is the ultimate realization, it also represents what the "illah (final cause)" serves to achieve.

The point where different schools of kalam converge is that there is no "obscene" in anything in nature. Because every being in the universe and the ecosystem as a whole is the work of Allah, who "does nothing without purpose or useless". They are the reflections of divine wisdom, grace and art.

The point where different schools of kalam converge is that there is no "abas (عَبَسَ; senseless, pointless, and absurd)" in anything in nature. Because every being in the universe and the ecosystem as a whole is the work of Allah, who "does nothing without purpose or useless". They are the reflections of divine wisdom, grace and art.

Allah's name "al-Hakīm (الحَكِيم)" means that He does not make anything purposeless, useless or meaningless. This divine name leads one to the conclusion that every being in nature has a special function. The entire universe was created by God, the Wise, in such a way that man can realize his own existence. None of the beings in the universe can act against the purpose for which they were created. Just as they involuntarily surrender to the will of the Creator, man must voluntarily surrender to the same will. This conscious surrender enables man to fulfill the purpose of his existence and live a life in harmony with his nature (i.e. his nature and natural environment). Likewise, in every evil, there is a good that is intended to occur or to be recog-

nized . Furthermore, humans have not been able to discover and explain the function of some entities and forms of relationships in nature. But this does not mean that all entities and interactions are dysfunctional, unnecessary and evil.

One of the remarkable expressions in the Qur'an is that the fly is shown as a proof of Allah's might.¹⁴ The Qur'an rejects the pretension of "God is so transcendent that he does not give an mosquito as an example."¹⁵ Because there are many "aayaah kawniyyah (i.e. sings proving the existence and attributes of Allah) in beings that are seen as disgusting when acting with prejudices acquired from the social environment. When viewed from different angles and with different information, surprising talents and beauties will be seen in them.

At this juncture of our examination, we would also like to mention what kind of reflections teleological evidences and ecosystem evidence, and concepts such as destiny, divine beauty, divine wisdom, the purpose of creation will have on a believer's life:

- To understand the order and balance in the universe, to use the mind for this purpose and to observe beings

People should realize that nothing in nature was created in vain, and should look at nature with contemplation and aesthetic pleasure.¹⁶ He should understand that the ecological balance is formed by the coherence that covers all beings and that there is divine wisdom and balance behind it:

"The sun and the moon move according to a fixed reckoning; the stars and the trees bend in prostration. He raised the heavens and set up the measure, so that you

¹⁴ "People, here is an illustration, so listen carefully: those you call on beside God could not, even if they combined all their forces, create a fly..." (22/al-Hajj, 73.)

¹⁵ "God does not disdain to give a parable about a gnat or a smaller creature. The faithful know that it is the truth from their Lord, but those who deny the truth ask, 'What could God mean by this parable?' ..." al-Baqarah 2/26.

¹⁶ 3/Āl-i Imrān, 190–191.

should not transgress the measure. Always measure with justice and do not give short measure."¹⁷

- To approach some beings that are seen as dysfunctional, redundant or harmful in the universe, equipped with scientific knowledge, not with prejudice.

Man should not judge that the beings whose wisdom he has not yet known are meaningless and useless. Instead of contemplating a world without them, he should always try to observe them and grasp the reasons for their creation.

Considering that science is still developing and is still a self-renewing and correcting process, nature has a complex order that exceeds the individual's ability to know and think. And this leads to the conclusion that the knowledge, wisdom and power of the Creator are endless, and that his actions are perfect and that his art is unique. To act from this conclusion gives us the principles that there is nothing accidental, dysfunctional or useless in nature and that the entire universe should be viewed as a living organism.

According to the evolutionists mentioned, the existence of wild, ugly and disgusting creatures such as wolves, lions, tigers, snakes and scorpions is not good, but bad. Their existence is proof that there is no Wise creator. However, these creatures also have many beauties of creation. From a scientist's point of view, they are not repulsive. In addition, drugs are obtained from some of these creatures. Research on these creatures inspires various inventions. Some wild animals remind people of their own helplessness, their need for Allah's grace. In addition, they remind people of otherworldly torment.¹⁸

As a matter of fact, evolutionists, including Heackel, argue that dysfunctions are seen in various beings in order to prove that there is no purpose in the universe, and that there is therefore a process of evolution, not creation. They argue that harmful animals and plants

¹⁷ 55/al-Rahmān, 5–9; Bkz. 67/al-Mulk, 3; 25/Furqān, 2.

¹⁸ Qādī Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharh al-Uṣūl al-Hamsah*, s. 505-507.

are found in nature and that some completely harmless and perhaps very useful animals are also sometimes vulnerable. Then they argue that these facts contradict eternal justice and goodness. The result of this claim is that the nature cannot be the work of a creator who has perfect justice, grace, goodness and power, but that it emerged in a process of evolution. According to them, there are structural defects in the eye and other senses. These defects prove that they were not created for a purpose beforehand by a creator, but emerged unconsciously during the evolution process. In addition, the breasts of the man, the caecum, the muscular part of the ear, the tonsils, the wings of many birds, etc., are shown as evidence that living things and their limbs were not created with a purpose, but emerged as a result of a (barren, fruitless) evolutionary process. In other words, the fact that the living thing does not have a function is because of that its evolution process has stopped due to various factors.

The evolution theory has also had negative reflections on human-nature relations and the social field. according to this theory the existence of the strong and the extinction of the weak as a basic principle of nature . This principle strengthens the hand of people who use knowledge as a tool of domination, but ignores that everything taken from nature has a price. On the other hand, explanations regarding wild life do not remain merely descriptive when transferred to the human life, but inevitably become normative and value-declaring decrees. Because, "*natural*" and "*human*" are not the same thing. Transferring the "*natural*" to human life and society in a normative way is also an irrational and insensitive approach. The result of this approach is social Darwinism and eugenics. It is to think whether it is more rational and economical to help people suffering from hunger and misery or to leave them to their own devices (i.e., to die). It is to argue that problems such as drought, famine, hunger and poverty serve to balance the human population in nature. Whereas, human is to have reason, conscience, to think with the concepts of justice and mercy; It has distinctive features such as being able to reorganize its environment and carrying responsibility. The result of these features is to establish a civilized life and to rebuild the world.

Divine grace requires that every existing evil must be implicitly good, if not explicitly and directly. According to al-Ghazālī (1058-1111), a great Muslim theologian, every existing evil has a good implicit in it. When this evil is removed, the good implicit in it becomes dysfunctional, and its dysfunctionality is a greater evil.¹⁹ Therefore, belief in divine grace encourages the effort to discover the good behind what appears to be evil. Bad and painful events in nature enable the good to be known and to realize that goodness prevails in the universe. It leads people to know their helplessness and to humility. However, the thesis that there are evils in the world that are incompatible with the existence of the absolute good God (the trilemma of the problem of evil), also poses a problem in man's view of nature. Because, this approach considers some entities in the ecosystem as unnecessary, dysfunctional and harmful.

In this context, the concepts of wise and purpose of God's creating act, ecological balance and cosmological order have an important place in terms of Islamic theology of ecology and environmental ethics. Because, these concepts indicate that people cannot act irresponsibly in order to reach their needs and desires. Purpose and order raise the consciousness that every being fulfills a necessary function for order, bio-diversity and continuity in nature. Purposefulness in creation requires responsibility for the individual, who is in the process of being tested, both to his own existence and to his social and natural environment. It encourages people to act on knowledge both in the field of ideas and actions, to use this knowledge in accordance with moral-spiritual values, and thus to live in harmony with the order in nature.

- To act in accordance with the order in nature by using knowledge in accordance with moral values.

Man should pay attention to the moderation he observes in the universe, and avoid attempts to disrupt the order and aesthetics of the

¹⁹ al-Ghazālī, *al-Maqṣad al-Asnā*, 64-65.

natural environment. This principle is based on Human responsibility. If a person does not use his will well, the damage he will cause to the natural environment in which he lives will cause him to suffer as well:

*“Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of the evil which men’s hands have done: and so He will make them taste the fruit of some of their doings, so that they may turn back from evil.”*²⁰

This verse points out that people's unconscious actions cause extremely negative effects on the ecosystem and human life. Deviations of faith and moral degradation are reflected in the ecological order; then, it threatens human life as environmental problems caused by humans:

*“Whatever misfortune befalls you is of your own doing. Besides, God forgives much [of your mistakes]...”*²¹

- Sense of responsibility and sense of trust (amaanah): to act with the awareness that it should enbeauty the earth

A view based on purpose and order (teleological doctrine) brings human responsibility to the fore. The first step of this responsibility is to direct one's gaze to the universe; observing the entities and events in nature; understanding the order and being aware of the reflections of Allah's attributes.

- to look at nature and life with an optimistic view

The understanding that all beings in the universe and the relations between them are in an order and purpose gives people an optimistic point of view. The fruit of this optimistic view is man's moral maturity in his dealings with people and other beings. In addition, this approach leads the individual to aware the aesthetic phenomenon in nature and to reflect it to the his lifestyle.

²⁰ 30/al-Rūm, 41. See also: 23/Mū'minūn, 71.

²¹ 42/al-Shūrā, 30.

- to have compassion and mercy for all living things

Faith in divine grace and mercy leads human beings to approach the creatures of nature with love and compassion while seeking refuge in the mercy and grace of Allah.

- to mature the human spiritually

From the point of view of Islam, it is necessary to consider the life of this world and the hereafter together, and to regulate one's all life and each behaviors with a sense of responsibility. Bad and painful events in nature reminds human being of the afterlife. It calls him to repentance, prayer and righteous and virtuous action. It serves to learn patience and to avoid from bad behaviors. These are extremely important for the spiritual education and moral maturity of human beings.

2.4. THE VALUE OF ASSETS AND THE SUBREMENTY OF EXISTENCE OVER ABSENCE

There is a close correlation between how humans approach nature and the value they attribute to the entities within nature and to the order of interaction among these entities. Islam provides guidance to humans in this regard through its explanation of the relationship between Allah, the universe, and human.

The natural environment takes place within "wasail (the instrumental subjects)"²² of the science of kalam. However, as we define it, it is one of the main themes of *Islamic social theology* [i.e., *ilm al-kalam al-ijtimai*].²³ Because the Islamic social theology also deals with how Islam believes is reflected as mentality and principles in human activities.

According to the almost all of Muslim theologians, knowledge about the Transcendent Being, namely "marifetullah", is based on reasoning and referring; it can be reached through "al-nazar (contemplation)" and "al-istidlal (infering). al-Nazar (contemplation) is ob-

²² The subject of the science of "Kalam" is divided into two aspects: firstly, those that constitute the goals of this science, which are known as "**masā'il**" or "**maqāsid**". Secondly, the field of knowledge that serves as a means to reach these goals, which is known as "**mabādī**" or "**wasā'il**."

Wasā'il are conceptual knowledge, logical methods, rational principles, and used to foundation the creed and elementary doctrines of Islam. They are the instrumental pieces of knowledge that includes principles, concepts, definitions, premissal propositions, and classifications employed to achieve accurate understanding and resolutions in the fundamental matters of Kalam. In short, wasā'il constitute the realm of instrumental and auxiliary knowledge within the Kalam.

²³ As mentioned above, the Islamical social theology is the approach to the problems that humanity is facing today in terms of kalam. In other words, it is to research the mentality foundations and solutions to fundamental problems.

Social theology receives data which are projections to the field of kalam from the knowledges that had been produced by social sciences. And it criticizes the theories put forward by social scientists at the point where they are related to the Islamic belief. For detailed information, please refer to the "2.2. *Social Theology*" section in the introduction chapter of this book.

serving the universe and trying to draw conclusions by thinking about the data obtained.²⁴ Since the mind can grasp "marifatullah (the knowledge about Allah)" only with evidence, nature is a field of existence that provides binding documents, conclusive evidences for the existence of Allah. Observing this realm of existence is a fundamental step in discovering the entities that constitute the ecosystem, the harmony and interrelationships among them, and the complex ecological cycles.

In this context, "the ecological balance in nature" and "the cosmic ecosystem" formed by various ecosystems, has three theological functions. These:

- Demonstrating the existence of God
- Demonstrating the uniqueness of God (al-tawhid)
- Representing the divine attributes, especially knowledge, wisdom and power.

For this reason, it can be said that ecology as a science has a great role in realizing the purpose of the science of kalam.

2.2.1. UNIVERSE: "THE BOOK OF CREATION" BY GOD

According to Islam, nature is full of signs and proofs of the Creator (al-Āyāt). In this respect, it is like an embodied revelation explaining Allah's names, attributes and unique artistry to people in its own language.

Just as there are revealed verses that is read (al-matluwv) in the

²⁴ According to Muslim theologians (kalam scholars), the existence of Allah should be proven through rational arguments rather than relying on report (khabar) conveyed by revelation. This is because accepting the informations that comes through revelation requires prior knowledge of the existence of Allah and His sending of revelations. Therefore, the existence of revelation is based on knowing the existence and attributes of Allah. for this reason, the existence of Allah should be proven through rational evidences, not through informations conveyed by revelation. otherwise, "*dawr (logical tautology)*" emerges.

Qur'an, there are "*al-āyāt al-kawniyyah* (i.e. observed and perceived verses of Allah in nature)" also. For this reason, Muslim thinkers and scholars, especially Sufis, evaluated nature almost like a book. They called it "the universe book". While the Qur'an is the book of revelation, the universe is the book of creation (*al-kitāb al-kawnī*) that confirms the Qur'an. In this subject Seyyed Hossein Nasr is saying as following:

The cosmic dimension of the Quran became elaborated over the centuries by many Muslims sages who referred to the cosmic or ontological Quran (*al-Qur'an al-takwīnī*) as distinct from and complementing the composed or "written" Quran (*al-Qur'an al-tadwīnī*). They saw upon the face of every creature letters and words from the pages of the cosmic Quran which only the sage can read.²⁵

Beings are the manifestations and embodiment of the will and love of Allah, who is the absolute good. Therefore, the asset is a value; existence is a plus, that is, a quality of goodness and perfection. It reflects Allah's attributes such as life, knowledge, will, power, creating (*khalq*), creating and forming the beings without any mold or preceding example (*ibda'*) and His names. Contrary, absence is "the absence of goodness" and it is darkness. Therefore, despite the relative deficiencies and undesirable influences of the beings existing in the universe, they have a value far from relativity, such as being willed by Allah.

In terms of Islam, beings originally was present only in the eternal knowledge of Allah. Then, they were brought into the realm of existence as manifestations and reflections of divine attributes in order for Allah to be known. Existence is first known by Allah, and then it becomes existing in the external realm and has the quality of being a means for Allah to be known by other beings. Since the universe enables Allah to be known, named as "*al- ālam (العالم)*" in Ara-

²⁵ Nasr, "*Islam And Environment Crisis*", 34-35.

bic. The name of "al- ālam (العالم)" has been derived from the same root with the word "ilm (عِلْم)", which means knowledge and science.

The universe, as it were, annotates the names of Allah; interprets His actions with their effects and His attributes with their manifestations. It provides the perception of God's art and His works by the various senses of human. In this way, it enables people to grasp the most beautiful names of Allah (al-asma al-husna) by activating their intuition, reason and abstraction abilities. Thus, nature, contrary to Hegel's claim, is not the alienation of the Absolute, but rather manifestations (and reflections) of the Absolute's attributes. In terms of being the signs, evidences and documents of the Absolute Truth, it enables the Absolute to be intuited, comprehended and known to man. For this reason, the Qur'an turns human's gaze to the universe:

"Do the disbelievers not see how rain clouds are formed [or camels are created], how the heavens are lifted, how the mountains are raised high, how the earth is spread out?"²⁶

Just as it is necessary to read the Qur'an and understand its message, it is also necessary to observe and try to understand nature, which is God's creation verses. Just as it is necessary to memorize the message of the Qur'an and to transfer it to life, it is also necessary to try to preserve the order in nature and to live in harmony with this order.

At the core of religion is faith. the observing of nature and contemplating on natural order accompanies also the reasoning process, which is a necessity for the realization of (cognitive basis of) belief. Therefore, Hz. Muhammad (Bless be upon him) has said:

Meditate on God's creations; do not think about the essence of Allah [i.e. don't imagine and visualize Allah in your mind]. You cannot afford to think about the essence of Allah.²⁷

²⁶ 88/al-Ghāshiyah (The Overwhelming Event), 17-20.

²⁷ Suyūṭī, *al-Jāmi' al-Saghīr*, Coira, no date, vol. I, p. 136.

*Reflect deeply upon the creation, but do not reflect upon the essence of the Creator. Verily, His essence cannot be known other than to believe in it.*²⁸

According to another reputation, The Prophet of Islam, blessing be upon him, said that:

*"Do not think on Allah's essence, meditate on his blessings."*²⁹

2.2.1. THE TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT AS THE ECOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

Teleological evidence is also "Ecological evidence". For, the teleological proof is, in fact, the proof of the existence, unity and unique attributes of God, based on the ecological order.

*"The sun and the moon move according to a fixed reckoning; the stars and the trees bend in prostration. He raised the heavens and set up the measure, so that you should not transgress the measure. Always measure with justice and do not give short measure."*³⁰

The branches of science, especially named ecology, explain the order and continuity called "eco-system", "ecological order", "natural balance" in the universe. Every type of being and every habitat in nature has been the subject of a science.

Every natural science arrives at generalizations that explain the processes in realm that it is the subject of the research. These generalizations show the existence of a temperance, harmony and order that dominates all nature. If there was no order in the universe and everything was in chaos, there would be no life in the world, nor would there be science. Because, without this order, it is not possible to talk about rules (scientific laws, laws of nature) that cover the

²⁸ Ajlûnî, *Kashfu'l-Khafâ ve Muzîl al-Îlbâs*, Coira, undated, vol. I, p. 371.

²⁹ Bayhakî, *al-Asmâ wa al-Sifât*,

³⁰ Al-Rahmân 55/5-9.

whole and are valid in every unit. Outputs of a science are consisted of "universal laws (al-qawâid al-kulliyyah)". Universal laws are the expression of the complex but aesthetical order of a certain set of beings (i.e. the entity set) that science examines. The continuity of any entity set, in order and properly to its purpose, is based on these laws set by Allah.

Lawfulness is the definitive proof of order. The science that discovers and explains this lawfulness proves that both the universe as a whole and every being in the universe is in an order. It bears witness to the beauty and order in the universe. It proves the truth of "*Who gave everything its perfect form. [He created everything in the best way]...*".³¹ With this feature, various natural sciences, especially ecology, serve to prove the belief in creation. Because they present the proofs of the Creator's existence and attributes in "The Book of Creation" and explain the manifestations of God's names. In fact, it is observed that philosophies of ecology, like ecology as a science, which are outside of social ecology, perform the function of proving the premises of teleological evidence, albeit unconsciously and unintentionally. Even though they are based on a secular paradigm and the theory of evolution, such a result eventually emerges.

Ecological evidence can be expressed in the form of a syllogism consisting of the following propositions:

- In the universe, there is a harmony and balance among entities, an unique design, and intertwined order among the beings. Ultimately, order prevails over disorder, ensuring the continuation and enrichment of life.
- This order and purpose cannot occur on its own; it cannot originate from beings themselves that do not have intelligence, knowledge and consciousness.
- In that case, there must be a being with infinite/absolute knowledge, power, will and grace that gives this order and purpose to the world. This being is God.

³¹ Secde 32/7.

It is expressed in many verses that Allah created the universe from the smallest beings like a single-celled organism [Unicellular organism] to galaxies within a measure and plan. For example, the verse "...Who created all things and made them to an exact measure."³² emphasizes that the entire universe was created in an order. In another verse, "We have created all things in due measure."³³ is called.

In another verse that is about the existence and attributes of God, harmony and beauty, order and aesthetic structure of the beings in the universe are emphasized as evidence and ecological order is reminded:

*"[He is] who created the seven heavens, one above the other. You will not see any aw in what the Lord of Mercy creates. Look again! Can you see any aw? Look again! And again! Your sight will turn back to you, weak and defeated."*³⁴

*"As for the earth, We have spread it out, set firm mountains on it, and made everything grow there in due balance."*³⁵

The basis of ecological sustainability and continuity in the functioning of nature is the teleological structure of the universe.

From the point of view of the Qur'an, no existence in the universe is without purpose, and no existence is meaningless. In the verses, "abas (meanless, useless)", "la'b (game)", "baatil (falsehood, vain)" and "distraction, amusement (lahw)" are rejected as concepts contrary to divine wisdom, grace:

*"Did you think We had created you in vain, and that you would not be brought back to Us?"*³⁶

"Who [this believer and understanding] remember God

³² 25/al-Furqān [The Differentiator], 2.

³³ 54/al-Qamar [The Moon], 49.

³⁴ 67/al-Mulk [The Sovereignty], 3-4.

³⁵ 15/al-Hijr, 19.

³⁶ 23/al-Muminūn (The Believers), 115.

*standing, sitting, and lying down, who reect on the creation of the heavens and earth: 'Our Lord! You have not created all this without purpose...'*³⁷

Order and randomness are opposing concepts. Randomly connecting components that are not designed for a system disrupt the order and structure. Therefore, the emergence of an order and a system through random occurrences is also not possible. For example, no rational person who sees the TDV Encyclopedia of Islam, arranged from volume one to volume forty-four on a shelf, does not see it as possible that it came about as a result of randomness and coincidence. Suppose that volume 27 is put upside. The majority of people is uncomfortable with it. Because there is harmony between the aesthetics in the external world and the aesthetic pleasure (al-zawq al-saleem) of human. In this way, it is unreasonable to argue that the universe, which we observe to be in order down to the smallest detail, and the mental and aesthetic abilities that comprehend this, emerged as a result of random events.

Order and purpose in the universe cannot arise on its own; It cannot originate from beings that do not have reason and knowledge. To say that this order, which has been discovered by intelligent people for centuries by thinking, observing, examining and even doing experiments, came into existence through blind coincidence, to attribute the functions of design, planning and programming to randomness. It also means giving the properties of reason and science to inanimate and mindless beings. The organisms in an ecosystem or the cells that make up the organism contribute to the proper functioning of the system without being conscious of it. It is not possible for these entities, who do not know the whole of the system, to choose a necessary function for the system on their own. The system depends on the existence of a Supreme Being (Jalla Jalaaluh) with knowledge and power.

Some important points should be underlined here:

³⁷ 3/Âl-i İmrân 191. Ayrıca bk. 38/Sād 27; 44/Duhān, 38-39; 29/al-Ankabût 44; 21/al-Anbiyā, 16; 30/Rūm 8; 46/al-Ahkāf, 3.

- First, the opposite of 'design' is 'randomness'³⁸, not coincidence or chance meeting. "Coincidence (like as *tasaduf* or *tawafuq* in Arabic)" is a concept that disassembles meaning of "randomness". Without design, there cannot be repeating chance meetings, but only just randomness. The increase in randomness does not lead to the formation of order, but to the fact that the disorder gradually becomes unmanageable.

- Second, randomness and order are opposite and antithetic. Because the existence of order requires rule, whereas randomness is ruleless. The order and regularity is the repetition of events within certain rules, whereas randomness is a one-time thing. There isn't be any sustainability originating from one time thing.

- Hence, thirdly, order does not come from disorder; "rule" does not founded from randomness. In that case, there must be a being that creates the entire universe for a purpose and organizes it in accordance with this purpose. To do this, he must be A Person who is The All-Knowing, The Ever-Wise, The Omnipotence and The All-Willing. This being is called God.

Ecological evidence implies a certain norms regarding the human-universe relationship. Considering the order in nature to be a trust from God to human beings is one of these norms. In terms of theistic approach, "what gives human beings a valuable place in nature is their intellectual, moral, and spiritual values, not only their ability to dominate over other creatures." And these qualities are necessary to protect the environment.³⁹

2.1.3. THE ARGUMENT OF ECOSYSTEM

The argument of ecosystem is based on the fact that all entities form a holistic system and that each of them has an ecological function in this system. The universe is a perfectly single whole and a

³⁸ It is called '*rasgelelik*' in Turkish.

only system whose all parts necessarily require one another. This structure means that it had been created as a whole by unique the Glorious God.

Some call the argument of ecosystem as "The Law of Divine Oneness". According to The Law of Divine Oneness,

'Everyone and everything is connected in the world we live in. Every thought, word, or action of ours will take effect on others. As everything and everyone is connected to each other subconsciously, we should start thinking about the good in others, and they will think about the good in you.'⁴⁰

Regarding this matter, a scholar who lived in our era says the following:

There is Great Wisdom in the Creation and Combining of Opposites: The Sun and a Minute Particle Are Equal in the Hand of Power.

... Power is manifested in the combining of opposites.⁴¹

Everything is Equal Before Divine Power

*"Creating and resurrecting all of you is only like creating or resurrecting a single soul: God is all hearing and all seeing."*⁴²

Divine power is essential [and] inherent; impotence cannot impinge on it.

There can be no degrees in it [Divine power], obstacles cannot intervene in it. For power, there is no difference between universal and particular;

³⁹ Yaran, *"The Ecological Value of the Teleological Argument"*, 187.

⁴⁰ Mark Phooi, *"12 Universal Laws"*, <https://firstmedia.edu.sg/self-development/12-universal-laws/> [access date: 02.06.2022]

⁴¹ Nursī, *Words*, 753.

⁴² 31/Luqmān, 28.

For everything is tied [interconnected] to [and inter-dependent on] everything else; one who cannot make everything can make nothing.⁴³ So, "without holding the universe in his hand, one cannot create a particle." If anyone's hand has not the strength to raise up the earth together with innumerable suns and stars and string them in order like prayer-beads, and to place them on the head and chest of endless space he cannot claim to create anything in the world.⁴⁴

Small Things Are Tied To Big Things

Certainly, the one who created the mosquito created both the sun and the Milky Way;

And the one who ordered the flea's stomach clearly set in order the solar system;

While the one who gave sight to the eye and need to the stomach, definitely painted the sky's eye with light and spread a table of foods over the face of the earth.⁴⁵

To give an example, the human eye is a wonder of creation. Without realizing it, people focus continuously and more faster than cameras with the highest technology. Again, HDR technology⁴⁶ in photography has come a long way, but it had not come close to the superiority of human vision. Despite this astonishing superiority in its design, it is necessary to create an environment in which countless conditions are fulfilled that will enable the eye to function. Such as the creation of the Sun to illuminate the world, the fact that the

⁴³ Nursī, *Words*, p. 732.

⁴⁴ Nursī, *Words*, p. 733.

⁴⁵ Nursī, *Words*, p. 732.

⁴⁶ HDR (high dynamic range): It is the technology of balancing the excess light and dark parts of the captured image. This technology consists of capturing simultaneously multiple frames of the same scene but with different exposures; one in a low light setting and the other in a high light setting. And then combines (superimposing) them into one frame by throwing out the dark parts from the first exposure and the light bursts from the other. It is the creation of a more balanced

Earth's orbit is at a certain distance from it, the presence of atmospheric layers, the ozone layer's filtering of harmful rays, color pigments that reflect light in different colors, the speed of light, and the laws of optics... All these will enable the eye to see. The fact that it was designed in such a way proves that the creator of the eye globe and the creator of the earth globe are the same being. Therefore, it is Almighty Allah Who created the eyeball and the one who created the earth.

The animal that has the largest number of eyeballs in the animal world is the dragonfly. It looks as if it has two big globular eyes. Yet each of his eyes is consists of thousands of tiny lenses - each basically functioning as an individual eye.

, [Some] studies have found that each of a dragonfly's bulbous eyes are made up of up to ~30,000 facets, which contain the opsins.

The visual sensing elements together produce a mosaic of 'images' which are integrated in the creature's brain. Although, how this happens is a mystery.⁴⁷

Perceptions that come to the all facets must be transmitted to the brain by thousands of nerves, and the brain must combine all these.

A dragonfly can't turn it's eyes, but it really doesn't have to. Because, the thousands of facets in each eye of it are not in a single line. They face in slightly different directions such as up, down, front and back. Thus, a dragonfly can see in all directions at the same time. Combining the images from different angles in such a way that there are no refractions and distortions can be achieved by the most fine-tuning to it.

Scientific knowledge and technology that can place so many lenses in a space of only a few millimeters and give each of them the

photographic frame than those of individually captured frame.

⁴⁷ Sarah Griffiths, "Dragonflies see in Ultra HD: Winged insects have the best vision in the animal kingdom", www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2966970/Dragonflies-Ultra-HD-Winged-insects-best-vision-animal-kingdom.html

ability to perceive is not available today. It is impossible to create a nervous system that will enable these facets to perceive light and make this perception perfectly visible. Additionally, "the amount of visual data a dragonfly's eyes capture is so massive that researchers aren't quite sure how their tiny insect brains can process all of it." Then, can this flawless structure, the like of which man cannot produce despite superior knowledge and experience, be emerged un-awares of the functioning of the whole universe, without taking into account the laws of nature? In that case, the one who creates the eye of a dragonfly can only be the creator of this universal order. Because creating an eye cannot be independent of creating the Sun, the ozone layer that filters out harmful rays, the pigments in each matter and the natural laws in the optics.

Nothing Can Exist Without Everything Else

Throughout the universe the mystery of co-operation is both concealed and pervasive; intimated in every part of it are mutual assistance and the reciprocal answering of needs.

Only an all-encompassing power could do this, and create the particle, situating it suitably to all its relations.

Every line and word of the book of the world is living; need drives each, acquaints one with the other.

Wherever they come from, they respond to the call for help; in the name of Divine unity, they meet with their surroundings.

Every living word has a face and eye that looks to all the sentences.⁴⁸

Balance Between Determination And Free Will

⁴⁸ Nursī, *Words*, p. 731.

In the Quranic verses, attention is drawn to the fact that the universe is occurred as a holistic system where both the laws of nature operate and human will becomes effective. The arrangement of entities and events in the universe by "The Absolute Will (who is called al-Fail al-Mukhtar - Jalla Jalāluh-, i.e. The Free Creator)" and the granting of free will to human remove absolute determinism, and elevate human interactions with the environment to the level of the consciously actions.

Biodiversity

The fact that the planet we live in has an order that allows for biodiversity is another example of the cosmological order. Thanks to this order, countless plant and animal species live on earth, and human beings find a living environment where they can develop all their abilities. Life depends not only on the delicate design of every living thing, but also on the preparation of a living space suitable for that design in advance for that creature.

A piece of earth never become a habitat unless it has a fauna and flora. Therefore, among the conditions that provide this living space, it can be counted that there are the numerous species of living and non-living beings having different features and abilities, in addition to factors following:

- Various laws of nature such as gravity,
- The Earth's position to the Sun, its own axis and its rotation around the Sun in a certain orbit - The presence layers of the atmosphere (example the ozone layer filters harmful sun rays),
- The climate that allows the formation of glaciers at the poles.

All these reveal that every being in the universe was designed for a specific purpose.

Each letter of the book of the universe gains meaning within the whole and participates in the meaning of the whole. Every living thing needs all life resources. The One who creates a particle as it should be and encodes its function in a regular way can be only the one who creates the entire cosmos. In this sense, giving life to a spe-

cies is similar to giving life to a member of that species. Because a small plant in an ecosystem gains meaning only within that ecosystem.

The universe is a single ecosystem, although it consists of a wide variety of beings with differences and sometimes contrasts. As will be explained later, a simple example of this situation is that "the garbage (cleaning beings) of nature" were also created.

2.3. ORGANIC UNIVERSE

One of the negative receptions of human with his environment is the mechanical universe understanding (i.e., the comprehending the universe as in a mechanical order). Seeing the universe as a cosmic machine prevents us from approaching the all creatures in a sympathetic, loving and compassionate way. Because, people understand their environment best by building emotional relationships. They respect and protect it through a mystical affinity. In Islam, the basis of this mystic affinity is the understanding of that all beings are the "reflections" of "a single creative wisdom and will" and that the human is "the small universe" and the universe is "the great human".

2.3.1. THE UNIVERSE AS 'THE GREAT HUMAN'

Contrary to the understanding of the mechanical universe developed with the Enlightenment in the West, nature has been humanized in the eyes of Islamic scholars. In Islamic thought, since of al-Ikhwan al-Safa (i.e. the brothers of purity), it is seen that the universe is described as the "*great human being* (al-insán al-kabir)" and the human as the "*little universe*".⁴⁹ The Universe is the great man because it is

⁴⁹ Describing human as the small universe (microcosm) is also in question in Taoism, one of the Chinese religions. According to taoism, "The perfect human is thus imagined to be a flawless microcosm of the cosmic whole, with the bodily spirits perfectly attuned to their counterparts in the macrocosm." Bokenkamp, Stephen R., "Daoism: *An Overview*", *Encyclopedia of Religion*, editor in chief:

seen that the world has one body in all its spheres, gradation of heavens, its generating elements (arkán) and their productions."⁵⁰ al-Ikhwan al-Safa says that Allah has placed everything that exists in the universe in a microcosm (human), and that although man does not have the opportunity to observe the entire universe, he can also recognize the universe and the inner aspect of nature by observing his own existence. Ibn Tufayl (1106-1186), a Muslim philosopher who lived in Spain (al-Andalusia), emphasizes the following ideas through Hayy bin Yaqzan's thoughts:

Just as human beings are interconnected with their various organs, their effects and common goals, different species of the animal world and all beings in nature also are living organisms in mutual dependence. As there is a common spirit between the individuals of animal and plant species, nature as a whole has a common spirit.⁵¹

As a matter of fact, the following verse also implies that human beings have a unity of origin with the universe they live in:

*"From the earth We have created you and We will return you to it, and from it We shall bring you forth a second time."*⁵²

In Islamic thought, "little universe" - "great human" (i.e. microcosm and macro human) conceptualization settles in an organic universe understanding, where human and nature are seen as manifestations of the same truth, not mechanical. In that subject, The Spanish-born Sufi philosopher Muhyī al-Dīn Muhammad ibn al-'Arabī

Lindsay Jones, Thomson Gale, USA 2005, IV, 2177.

Democritus, an ancient Greek philosopher, considered human being as the "little cosmos" or "microcosm". He said that human is a universe in little. "Pythagoras said also that man was a microcosm, which means a compendium of the universe; not because, like other animals, even the least, he is constituted by the four elements, but because he contains all the powers of the cosmos." Kochanczyk, Karolina, "From Democritus to Early Christian Liturgy - How Was The Motif Of Man As A Microcosm Developing?", *Interactions In The History Of Philosophy II*, Edited by Burçin Ercan, Delta Publishing, İstanbul 2015, p. 47-49.

⁵⁰ Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, 67.

⁵¹ Ibn Tufayl, *Hayy ibn Yaqdhān*, 77-78, 84.

⁵² 20/Taha, 55.

(1165 -1240) says:

"Haqq (i.e. a name of God that means "truth, real and right") is embedded in everything we call creatures. If this were not so, beings would not be real. As such, Haqq is the same as being, and as such, Haqq protects everything with its own essence... He sees with every seer and appears in every visible. So the universe is its image. He, too, is the spirit of the universe and directs and manages it. In this way, the universe is "*al-insan al-kabīr (great human)*".⁵³

Although this passage is highly controversial in terms of kalam of Ahl al-Sunnah, it underlines that nature is a mirror of Allah's attributes. In other words, it emphasizes that it is necessary to see the reflections of Allah's attributes in all beings. This understanding raises the awareness that every being and occurring fulfills a necessary function for order, bio-diversity and continuity in nature.

In the words of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The soul which is nourished and sustained by the Quran does Not regard the world of nature as its natural enemy to be conquered and subdued but as an integral part of man's religious universe sharing in his earthly life and in a sense even ultimate destiny."⁵⁴

2.3.2. THE UNIVERSE GLORIFYING GOD

The Qur'an states that everything on earth and in the heavens glorifies Allah, that is, all the elements of The Universe are in a state of obedience, glorification and prostration to The Creator who has eternal power and sovereignty:

"The seven heavens and the earth and all who dwell therein glorify Him. There is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His praise; but you do not understand their glori-

⁵³ ibn al-'Arabī, *Fusūs al-Hikam*, 134-135.

⁵⁴ Nasr, "*Islam And Environment Crisis*", 34.

fication...”⁵⁵

“Do you not realize [Prophet] that everything in the heavens and earth submits to God: the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the trees, and the animals? So do many human beings...”⁵⁶

According to these verses, it would be incomplete to look at the world with a purely secular eye. The physical beings have also a spiritual background and theological value. They are in submission to the same source of existence [al-Haqq]. Therefore, there is a relationship determined by divine wisdom between the spirituality of man and the order in nature.

According to the poems of the famous sufi poet Yunus Emre (1238-1328), beings in nature also participate in the contemplation, glorification and hymnation of human beings. The following lines express this understanding:

With mountains, with stones,
Let me hymn your praises, O my Dear Lord!
With the birds in the dawn of everyday,
Let me hymn your praises, O my Dear Lord!

With fishes at the bottom of the water,
With gazelles in the Sahara,
While being a God lover darwish and saying "O God!"
Let me hymn your praises, O my Dear Lord!⁵⁷

⁵⁵ 17/al-Isrā, 44.

⁵⁶ 22/al-Hajj 18. Ayrıca bk. 24/Nūr, 41; 57/Hadīd 1; 59/Hashr 1; 61/Saff 1; 64/Teğābūn 1. vb.

⁵⁷ Dağlar ile taşlar ile
Çağırayım Mevla'm seni
Seherlerde kuşlar ile
Çağırayım Mevla'm seni
Sular dibinde mahî ile
Sahralarda ahu ile
Abdal olup yahu ile

In this poem, the whole universe, which was created in unity and balance by the same creative will, like a one body, turns towards Almighty Allah. It naturally participates in the praise and glorification that human beings do by choosing it with his free-will.

Islam has purified nature of secrets and hidden powers that have been come into contact through rituals such as magic. He has destroyed the magic and superstitions in the communication of man with nature. However, it did not reduce nature to a materialistic and mechanical perception, contrary, attributed human/living characteristics to it. Besides, by defining the universe as a book, Islam directed people to perceive the all beings as the sign that have semiotic structure, and to the activities of reading, and sense-making (decoding) them.

2.3.3. THE UNIVERSE AS MANIFESTATIONS OF DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

By showing the Creator's greatness, knowledge, wisdom, power, majesty, love, mercy, beauty (jamal) and artistry, each of the beings in the universe has a different value and status. For this reason, people should approach the natural order and the beings that are part of this order with care. This care means respecting Allah's will for projecting His attributes to the outside world. Living in harmony with the order in nature means living with the consciousness of Allah's wisdom and grace. On the other hand, God's will to create, who is "eternal good", also grounds that existence has priority and value against non-existence.

In addition, the reality of each being and occurrence in the universe, is originated in one or more names of Allah. Each of them is are manifestations of His attributes such as the knowledge, wisdom,

Çağırayım Mevla'm seni!

Click here to listen the poem in form a music track:

power and will of Allah and are transfiguration of His names such as Al-'Alīm (العليم, The Knower of All); Al-Khabīr (الخبير, The All-Aware) Al-Hakīm (الحكيم, The Perfectly Wisen), Al-Khāliq (الخالق, The Creator), Al-Bārī (البارئ, The Maker of Order), Al-Badī' (البدیع, The Originator), al-Al-Musawwir (المصور, The Shaper of Beauty); Al-Hafīz (الحفیظ, The Preserver).

It is the manifestation of Allah's names "al-Ahad (الأحد, The One)" and "al-Wāhid (الوحد, The Unique)" that the beings in nature form a coherent and harmonious system despite their multiplicity and diversity.

Another name of Allah is "al-Haqq (الحق, The Truth)". Allah is the source of the realities of beings in nature, including humans, and the rights they have (or should have) justly. In addition, Each of them has a different value by reflecting the 'The Most Beautiful Names' of Allah (al-asmā al-husnā) into the realm of existence.⁵⁸ So, respect for the rights of beings in nature means respect for the will of Allah, who is al-Haqq, al-Adl and al-Muqsid.

The unique designs in nature are the reflections of Allah's name "Al-Musawwir (المصور; the shaper of beauty, formative)". Since the names that refer to Almighty Allah are the most beautiful names (al-asmā al-husnā), the beings that reflect His most beautiful names are also beautiful. The proportionality and aesthetic value in assets are also the work of the adjective "al-Jamāl (Beauty)". Accordingly, grasping the coherence in nature and realizing the aesthetic value of each being means watching the reflections of Allah's name "al-Musawwir" and "al-Jamāl" in the book of the universe and reading, sense-making the references of them.

If we explain, we can say that Allah's attribute of beauty (al-Jamal) is manifested in the universe in two ways:

1. Creation of man and the whole nature in the most beautiful

www.youtube.com/watch?v=10J3houdgGc <https://youtu.be/10J3houdgGc>

⁵⁸ For details, see the "The Argument of Ecosystem" section of the article.

way.

2. Giving man a sense of aesthetics by God.

Awareness of preserving the beauties in nature requires noticing the coherence and aesthetics in the assets. Moderation, harmony and aesthetics in assets are one of the two sources of art.

First of them, beauties of The Earth that are road signs that lead people to art and civilization. In order for people to develop in terms of aesthetics and art, they must first perceive and comprehend these signs.

The second, an aesthetic pleasure that has been given by God. This good sense of aesthetical tasting originating from the fitrah is called "*al-dhawq al-salīm*" by some Muslim scholars.

If God had not created the universe in an aesthetic way or had not given man a sense of aesthetics, it would not have been possible for man to be sensible of beauty and to create various arts.

The aesthetic sense bestowed upon humans by God leads them to think beautifully. This inclination reaches perfection as the individual's mindset becomes adorned with moral concepts and their lifestyle aligns with moral principles. It contributes a good, decent and aesthetic manner to man's relations with both the social environment and the natural environment.

It's important to emphasize that humans have the responsibility to grasp and protect the aesthetics in nature before even considering artistic products. Otherwise, they would merely be replacing what is natural with the artificial, unable to generate true value. In that case, the names "*al-Musavvir*" and *al-Jamīl*" have, and should have reflections on human behavior.

The first of these reflections is in the theoretical field. This is seeing the image of matter, the aesthetic dimension of beings and occurrences; building the knowledge and philosophy of beauty. The discipline of aesthetics in the philosophy is an example of this. Islam and majority of other religions frame these activities with uncorrupt enjoyment (*al-dhawq al-salīm*) in accordance with the spirituality and morality of man. The type of art that provokes libido and aggression

is not approved by religions and is also against spirituality. For this reason, Muslim artists preferred abstract but meaningful and functional arts such as literature, music, architecture, calligraphy and marble, and arts inspired by nature. Art inspired by nature also beautifies nature. It enables people to show/display admiration, love, compassion and sympathy for nature.

The second is the practical dimension. To beautify both the appearance and inner world of oneself while being liberated, and to try to make the world he lives in more beautiful.

The ecological cycle is designed to prevent the fallouts and corpses of living things from polluting the earth. This cycle is also a manifestation and transfiguration of The Creator's name " Al-Quddūs (الْقُدُّوس)".

"al-Quddūs" means "the pure one, the absolutely clean, the most immaculate, the most holy" should be mentioned here:

al-Quddūs has also created cleansing beings in nature. For example, the dung beetle has an important function in cleaning the manure of other animals. Likewise, there are other cleansing creatures or elements in nature. They are part of the integrated system and ecological cycle in the nature. With these, Allah protects nature from rot and decay. God's establishment of an order that enables nature to self-clean is the "*tahaqquq*"⁵⁹ of His name al-Quddūs. Mankind's protection of nature against pollution is the "*takhalluq*"⁶⁰ of the name al-Quddūs.

⁵⁹ **Tahaqquk:** The manifestation and realization of the divine name in nature.

⁶⁰ **Takhalluq** through the names of Allah is that the believer has all of his bad intents and behaviors annihilated and in their places he assumes, the good senses and behaviors that the divine names implies. The virtue that humanbeing adopts the value indicated by the divine name as a one's moral principle, in shortly term, assuming the the Moral attributes of Allah (j.j.).

3. THE VALUE OF LIFE AND OF BIODIVERSITY IN NATURE

It is extremely important to see the value of life in beings as well as seeing the integrity and organism in the ecosystem. In terms of Islam, life in beings is the reflection of Allah's attributes such as mercy and affection, and his names such as The attributes and names of Allah are more discovered through living beings. Because the attributes and names of Allah have become more manifest to living things among all various beings. Thus, the following names of God are discovered by life in nature:

"Al-Hayy (الحي; The Ever Living One)",

"Al-Muhyī (المحيي; The Giver of Life)",

"Al-Mumīt (المميت, The Taker of Life

"Al-Ba'ith (الباعث, The Resurrector)",

"Ar-Rahmān (الرحمن; The All-Compassionate)",

"Al-Wadud (الودود; The Loving and being loved One) ",

"Ar-Razzāq (الرزاق; The Sustainer)",

"Al-Muqīt (المقيت; The Nourisher)",

"Al-Karīm (الكريم, The Generous)",

"Al-Wahhāb (الوهاب; The Giver of All)"...

For example, renewal, continuity in nature; nutrient cycle in ecosystem; survival and reproduction instincts in living creatures are indicators of Allah's name "al-Hafīz ((الحفيظ), The Preserver)".

At this point, providing some striking examples of this would be beneficial.

"Excessive pesticide use has often caused disastrous outbreaks of pests, which have then been overcome only with the aid of the pests' natural enemies. A dramatic example of this occurred 70 years ago in Peru, when in 1949 the organochlorine pesticides DDT, BHC and toxaphene were introduced into the cotton-growing area of Cañete Valley. At first the pesticides proved highly successful. Farmers, considering these pesticides as miracles of modern science, began to rely on them so much that they increased the frequency of pesticide use in order to further boost their production. They also cut down trees and bushes for easier spraying by plane. Yields went up from 494 kg per hectare in 1950 to 728 kg in 1954. However, two years after applications a serious trouble arose. By 1952, BHC had become ineffective against aphids, and in 1954 toxaphene could no longer control tobacco leaf-worm. Between 1955 and 1956, there was a population explosion of the moth *heliopsis virescens*, many of which were resistant to DDT, and at least six completely new pests appeared. That season, yields dropped to 332 kg per hectare, even though the organochlorines had been replaced by organophosphate pesticides and the applications had been increased from once every two weeks to once every three days."

What was overlooked in this event was the fact that all insects had their natural enemies. When agricultural pesticides were first introduced, a significant portion of the insects that naturally inhabited the environment and posed a threat to cotton were eliminated. However, along with them, beneficial insects that were the natural enemies of the harmful ones also disappeared. Furthermore, the habitats of beneficial insects and birds were eradicated due to the cutting down of trees and shrubs. On the other hand, certain insect species developed immunity and resistance to the pesticides within a couple

of years. As these insects began to multiply, and with their natural predators absent, they inflicted substantial damage on cotton fields.

"Cotton growers were thus forced to return to a more ecologically based, integrated approach."⁶¹ "Beneficial insects have been reintroduced from neighboring valleys, which fortunately had not been sprayed so this essential genetic reservoir had been conserved. Pesticides began to be used only with special permission and tried to be minimized with legal sanctions. As a result, promoted pests (insects which become pests because the pesticides wipe out their predators) have been retired to their original innocence, and conventional pests have declined to tolerable levels."⁶² "In this particular case, yields eventually returned to and even exceeded original levels."⁶³

Another example of this is "*The Operation Cat Drop (Parachuting Cats into Borneo)*":

"In the early 1950s, there was an outbreak of malaria among the Dayak people on the island of Borneo. The World Health Organization (WHO) tried to solve the problem. They began spraying large amounts of 'Dieldrin'⁶⁴ to kill the mosquitoes that carried the malaria parasite. The mosquitoes died and the malaria declined. Certainly, that was good. However, there were unexpected side effects of the spraying program control. The first of these effects was that the roofs of people's houses began to fall down on their heads. It seemed that the 'Dieldrin' was also killing a parasitic wasp which has previously controlled

⁶¹ Kiss, "*Pesticides: How to Decide*", p. 27.

⁶² Robert Allen, *How To Save The world -Strategy For World Conservation-*, Kogan Page (England), 1980, p 37.

⁶³ Kiss, "*Pesticides: How to Decide*", p. 27.

⁶⁴ It is a poison that is long lasting and harms living things without seeing the target.

thatch-eating caterpillars. Without its predators to eat them, the thatch-eating caterpillar population exploded. Worse than that, the 'Dieldrin' had poisoned the other insects. Then small lizards (geckoes) that also lived in the houses died after eating the poisoned insects. So, the cats started to die, the rats flourished, and the people were threatened by outbreaks of two new serious diseases: Typhus and plague that was carried by the rats. To cope with these problems, which it had itself created, the World Health Organization had to parachute a hundreds of live cats into Borneo in 1960."⁶⁵ This case shows the fact that the root of problems often stems from not being able to see the natural whole and ecological cycle. Also, it shows that the interfering in an ecosystem has can be unpredictable results.

In this context, it should be emphasized that one of the ethical reflections (takhalluqs) of the name "al-Hafiz" is the human being's discovery and preservation of the ecological balance in nature.

It should be noted that the main function of science is to discover and explain the order in nature. The fact that the scientist who discovered the laws of the natural order and the rules of sustainability, which are the signs of Allah's existence and majesty, does not forget or ignore The Creator (j.j.), means preserving the wisdom hidden in knowledge.

The two case examples given above show that ecosystems, both on a global and local scale, are protected by both the food chain and natural scavengers. Such that although a certain ecosystem has an extremely complex structure, everything necessary for the continuation of functioning is protected.

Concerning the value of life, a contemporary Islamic scholar

⁶⁵ Tina Grotzer (ed.), *Causal Patterns in Ecosystems -Lessons to Infuse into Ecosystems Units to Enable Deeper Understanding-*, Second Edition, available at: https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/revised_ecosystem.pdf, accessed June 12, 2023, p 205.

says:

Life is a Manifestation of Unity

Life is a light of unity; it manifests unity in this realm of multiplicity. Yes, it manifests unity, unifying multiplicity and making it one.

Life appropriates all things to everything. While for a lifeless thing all things are non-existent.⁶⁶

Thanks to Life, the Ant Is Greater than the Earth

If you were to weigh the ant on the scales [the balance,] of existence, the universe emerging from it could not be contained in our globe. In my view, the globe is living. But if, according to what others suppose, you were to take the dead [lifeless] globe and place it in the opposite pan to the ant, It would not weigh even half its conscious head.⁶⁷

Biodiversity has a more special value. Considering that although with the multiplicity (kathrah) and diversity in nature, they all constitute unity (wahdah). So, the absence of one of them will mean that some colors in a painting will be faded. Therefore, diversity in nature deserves attention, care and protection by humans. Therefore, it is necessary to respect the diversity of life (bio-diversity) and every living thing in it.

In addition, human beings have religious-moral obligations such as compassion towards other living things on earth. They all will be gathered before Allah on the Day of Judgment:

*All the creatures that crawl on the earth and those that fly with their wings are communities like yourselves. We have missed nothing out of the Record -in the end- they will be gathered to their Lord.*⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Nursī, *Words*, 735.

⁶⁷ Nursī, *Words*, 736.

⁶⁸ al-An'ām 6/38.

4. POSITION OF HUMAN IN THE PYRAMID OF BEINGS

It is known that religious teachings, which are based on the distinction between matter and spirit, direct people's talent, power and energy in favor of society and nature. In addition, the belief in the primacy of man over nature instills self-respect and creates an educational and practical basis for morality. As a matter of fact, it can be determined that three principles regarding the position of human beings come to the fore in Islamic thought, which also lays the groundwork for the ecological approach and environmental morality. These will be examined closely below.

4.1. FITRAH: THE VALUE AND SPIRITUALITY OF MAN

Today, some approaches that describe themselves as "ecological" cannot establish a reasonable relationship between that is *the humanitarian/civil* and that is *the natural*. The result of this is to see humanitarian/spiritual values as useless, meaningless and even harmful in order to comply with the order in nature. In order to get rid of this mistake, it is inevitable to understand the concept of fitrah (human/spiritual feature of creation) well.

One of the key concepts that determines the approach of Islam to human beings is fitrah (فطرة). Fitrah, refers to the inherent goodness and purity that all humans are born with, before they are influenced by the social environment. It could be defined as "the innate spirituality of man that refers to his humanitarian, moral, spiritual, social, civil aspects and his ability to be good". In other words, fitrah is the state of purity and innocence in which every human is born, the ability to choose right way (hidāyah) and tawhīd (belief in oneness of God):

There is none born but is created according to intrinsic nature [i.e. fitrah or Islam]. It is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian. It (fitrah) is that the beasts birn their young with their limbs perfect. Do you see anything deficient in them? [It is the human who changes on them later.] Then the profjhet quoted the Qur'an.⁶⁹

"...This is the natural disposition (fitrah) God instilled in mankind -there is no altering Gods creation- and this is the right religion, though most people do not realize it."⁷⁰

At this point, it should be noted that living in harmony and peace with nature differs from the concept of the "state of nature" mentioned by John Locke, Montesquieu, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, others social contract theorists and Karl Marx. The state of nature is a fiction with different explanations. Trying to determine the basic rules of human life based on this fiction is also an unfounded approach. Because there is inequality in nature, but there is also a balance and sustainability in this inequality. Inequality has a major function for maintaining the order in nature's highly complex design. However, inequality in human society is not sustainable. Because, the human social life is based on the equality in terms of "the meaning and value of being a human" and of "the social opportunities". Unlike other beings in nature, human are social, civilized, rational, believing and having principles. He has the ability to think and choose, and a sense of justice and responsibility. He can think through moral terms; and can evaluate his own actions as valuable and worthless, wise and absurd, good and bad, legal and illegal. He has civil needs such as sympathy, language, dialog, communication, knowledge, science, technique, art, philosophy, law, politics, and such as adopting a set of values and principles that guide the thought and behavior. For this reason, it cannot be considered right for him to live by ignoring the requirements of social and civil life, law, public

⁶⁹ Bukhārī, "Janā'iz" 80, 93; Muslim, "Qadar", 22; Abū Dāwūd, "Sunnah", 18; Tirmidhī, "Qadar", 5.

⁷⁰ 30/al-Rūm 30.

interest, morality and philanthropy. It is a shallow idea to imagine human beings in the conditions of wild beings who have no mind, consciousness and responsibility. This shallow thought makes an important mistake when trying to determine the rights and responsibilities of human beings according to the reality in nature. This mistake is to set aside the distinguishing innate features of the human being behind and to explain the existence of the human by only referring to his material needs, impulses, and power.

A person's wrong choices, evil deeds and harming his environment are not caused by its *fitrah* (innate spiritual character). On the contrary, it is the result of moving away from the spirituality and innate nature that Allah has placed in him. In this respect, *fitrah* is an comprehending that rejects the understanding of "man is the wolf to another man" and "man is the wolf to nature". It will be useful to mention a remarkable discussion here. Rights and freedoms, which are a civil-spiritual concept, are tried to be derived from "state of nature", "life alone" and "natural law (law of nature)" in the secular human rights doctrine. On the other hand, in the secular ecological approach, the ecological order is opposed to human rights and civil values. The rhetoric of Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) that summarized as "Homo homini lupus (man is wolf to another man)" this time in the extreme ecologist approaches, turns into shape as "Man is wolf to the nature."⁷¹ However, man is good as a requirement of his *fitrah*, and, in essence, he has the capacity to do best behavior towards nature.

Today, an anti-human approach has developed, which manifests itself in concepts such as post humanism, eco-centrism, bio-centrism, nature-centrism, and equivalency. It is inevitable that such an approach in the name of ecological ethics will damage the nature while upsetting the concept of human. Looking at history, it is seen that for centuries, human beings have been exalted as discourse, but both nature and humans have been exploited with an egocentric attitude as prac-

⁷¹ According to Hobbes, in the naturall condition "of Man, [...] is a condition of Warre of every one against every one; [...] that in such a condition, every man has a right to every thing ; even to one anothers body." Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 99.

tice. So much so that the development of social sciences such as the history of religions, sociology and anthropology was used to provide information support to imperialism. In this process, Eastern and Islamic studies by Western intellectuals called "*Orientalism*" also played a role in the exploitation of the East. Today, human is perceived as a threat to nature and the biodiversity of the planet. This time, human beings are seen as bad-harmful in a discourse that can be summarized as "Man is wolf to the nature.". Today, motivation is needed to work with hope to improve the world. One of the foundations that will form this motivation is the "*optimistic view*" and another is the "*belief in human dignity*". Both of these are values revealed by the religion of Islam.

4.2. NATURE AS THE FIELD ON WHERE HUMAN HAS BEING TESTED BY GOD

Humans have a special position in the ecosystem and biodiversity. First of all, human, among the beings in nature, is the only living thing who has reason, conscience, belief, moral values, freedom and responsibility.

Secondly, the beings in the universe were created in a certain order and presented to man. This fact is expressed in the Qur'an by the concept of "*taskhīr* (تَسْخِير)". However, "*taskhīr*" emphasizes that nature is also a test environment for human beings:

*We have adorned the earth with attractive things so that We may test people to find out which of them do best...*⁷²

"Taskhīr" is the preparation of all nature for man as a test environment, in order for man to do the best works. This notion;

- Makes man realize that he owes gratitude to Allah,

- Instills the consciousness of living in accordance with its fitrah,
- shows the magnitude of his responsibility and encourages him to take responsibility. The basic responsibility of man is to see life as a test process and nature as a test environment; it is to do good deeds (al-a'māl al-sālihah) worthy of human beings.

Islamic morality emphasizes that rational beings are responsible for other beings in nature. This subject will be explained later in the context of "huqūq al-ibād".

The worldly life is a test process for man; The hereafter is a life in which a person will see the reward for what he has done in the worldly life. At this point, attention should be drawn to the relationship between the verses following:

*"We will set up scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection..."*⁷³

*"On that Day [Doomsday], it [The Earth] will tell all, because your Lord will inspire it [to do so]."*⁷⁴

Human's relationship with the environment is also a part of his divine test. Whatever a person does in the life of this world, the earth will witness it in the hereafter. Besides, all living things will gather in the presence of Allah in the Hereafter. As a world of testing, the earth will also witness everything that man has done in this world.

In addition, the Qur'an emphasizes that the earth was created not only for humans, but *for all living things*. This confirms that rational beings are accountable to others:

*"He set down the Earth for His creatures."*⁷⁵

It is not appropriate for his *fitriational* position to live like other beings without moral responsibility. While man is operating on the natural environment, he must not only use his intelligence and power, but also his nous and conscience, which are the most important abili-

⁷² 18/al-Kahf, 7.

⁷³ 21/al-Anbiyā, 47

⁷⁴ 99/al-Zalzalah, 4-5.

⁷⁵ 55/al-Rahmān, 10.

ties God has given him only, and shape his behavior with moral concepts such as good and bad. He should evaluate his actions not according to his own interests and selfish wishes, but according to whether they serve the realization of the good and beautiful.

4.3. MAN'S BEING CALIPH ON EARTH: BUILDING THE WORLD

One of the judgments that ground environmental ethics and environmental law is as follows: This world is a value that we inherited from our ancestors and will leave as a heritage to the next generations. We need to transfer this heritage by preserving and even improving cultural and natural values in it. This reality, which is conceptualized as "*the right of future generations*"⁷⁶, finds its expression in the concept of caliphate of the Holy Qur'an.

The 'Caliphate', in the Qur'an, indicates the emergence of a new community that succeeds a previous one, inheriting facility, domain, and blessings that the previous community lost. The following verses are examples of this:

*Later We made you their successors in the land, to see how you would behave.*⁷⁷

*It is He who has made you successors [of others] on the earth and raises some of you above others in rank, to test you through what He gives you...*⁷⁸

A similar verse is as follows:

"We wished to favor those who were oppressed in the land, and to make them leaders and make them inheritors

⁷⁶ "*The rights of future generations*" are intrinsically linked to the concept of sustainability. Sustainability includes the protect and development of ecological order of the world and the heritages of humankind.

⁷⁷ Yūnūs 10/14. bkz. 24/al-Nūr 55; 35/al-Fātir 39.

⁷⁸ Al-An'ām 6/165.

[of Our bounties].”⁷⁹

What was expressed as '*making ones caliphs*' in the two previous verses above is expressed as '*making ones inheritor*' in the last verse. "*The caliphate and heirship on earth*" should be understood as that a human generation has take the earth as a trust from his predecessors, and that he has to leave it to those who follow him, both by preserving and beautifying-enriching it. That is, human's caliphate on earth requires him to rebuild the world which is a cultivation field to gain the hereafter, with its individual, social and ecological aspects, without any harming:

“...It was He [i.e. God] who brought you into being from the earth and made you inhabit it...”⁸⁰

The expression “وَأَسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا” in the mentioned verse, which is translated as “[it was He Who] made you inhabit it”, has various meanings and implications:

The first of these meanings is “to give a lifetime (e'māra)”. Accordingly, in the verse, “*Allah made you live there and made you permanent for a lifetime.*” is called.

The second meaning is “to built environment, make the world flourish”. This can be understood both descriptively and normatively:

1. “God gave you the power to built environment and civilization in the earth” (*descriptive meaning*)

2. “He commanded it to built environment and civilization” (*normative meaning*).⁸¹

It is a religious-moral value to develop the environment in a manner which is worthy of human dignity and to build a civilization in which humans exhibits the activities and products such as science, morality, law, politics and art in the best way. The activity of science and reconstruction is a form of worship, -not in the form of a ritual or ceremony, but in terms of its intrinsic value- a form of worship to Al-

⁷⁹ al-Kasas 28/5. Ayrıca bkz. 21/al-Anbiyā, 105 ve krş. 28/al-Kasas, 58; 44/al-Duhân, 28.

⁸⁰ 11/Hūd, 61.

lah.

As a matter of fact, the 'Imārah' (إمارة) is divided into types:

- religious obligatory (wājib),
- recommended act in religion (mandūb).

On the other hand, human alterations to the environment are also divided into two categories, depending on the extend of the harm they cause:

- disliked and disapproved act in religion (makrūh),
- forbidden act in religion (harām).

Civilization-building activity, even if it is not a form of worship, i.e. in a form of religious ritual, it is a servitude to Allah within its intrinsic value.

Thirdly, it is said that "الْمَدِينَةُ" in the verse comes from "umrā", which is an assignment agreement. In this case, what is explained in the verse is this: Allah keeps you alive on earth, then when your life is over, he is your heir. In other words, Allah did not give man the earth as an unconditional absolute property, but as a homeland, from which he will benefit throughout his life, and which the next generations will inherit from him when he died, and whose ultimate heir is Allah.⁸² In this sense, it can be said that the "*right of future generations (sustainable development)*" discussed in the West finds its expression in the verse.

Human also has the responsibility of building and keeping the earth alive. In Islam, all human relations are handled with the concept of responsibility as well as rights and freedom. Therefore, humans cannot construct their relations with the environment away from the concept of responsibility. Human freedom is not unlimited and aimless, and its behavior to nature must not be ignorant, unconscious and irresponsible.

⁸¹ al-Baidāwī, *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta'wīl*, I, 461.

⁸² Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, II, 278; al-Baidāwī, *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta'wīl*, I, 461.

5. VALUATING THE HUMAN- ENVIRONMENT RELATIONS THROUGH RELIGIOUS-MORAL CONCEPTS

As a religion that guides people in all areas of life, Islam, unlike the secular approach, does not distinguish between religious affairs and worldly affairs. However, secularism's emphasis on the "here" and "now" paves the way for individuals to ignore and violate the rights of future generations.

As a result of a secular perspective, seeing life as a struggle for survival is one of the main deviations in our age. Western thinkers who defended the "*social contract*" in political philosophy envisioned a "*state of nature*" in which individuals lived alone and there was no law, religion and morality, before the establishment of a society. While Thomas Hobbes has said that "man is the wolf of other man", many other thinkers have said that everyone has the right to everything, in these circumstances. According to Thomas Hobbes, in the state of nature, everyone is always at war against everyone else. He expresses the basic law of nature as that everyone has the right to everything, even to the body of another. This is where his fundamental error arises. According to Hobbes, from this basic law of nature, which compels men to work for achieving peace, follows the following second law: If a man wants peace and self-preservation, he must give up this right to everything and he should be content with having as much freedom towards others as he wants freedom for others to have towards himself.

Behavior that is natural, or to be more precise, belonging to wild-

life, is behavior that is not evaluated through moral concepts. The fact that a cheetah hunts and eats a newborn gazelle, an elephant peels off the bark of trees, and that some plants do not allow other plant species to live in the place where themselves are live, cannot be characterized by moral judgments such as good and evil. These are pertained to wildlife and can only be analyzed descriptively. Drawing normative conclusions from nature or wildlife can sometimes lead to important mistakes. Herein lies Darwin's terrible mistake: Even before his theory was confirmed, he has began to assert that the affairs occurred in wildlife must be also occurred in human/society life. Thus, his theory transcended the boundaries of biology and became historical fiction. He and his followers started to write the illustrated-drawn history of mankind based on the theory he put forward. As in Marxism, Anarchism, Freudism, Liberalism, and the theory of Social Ecology that is recently he tended to support theory through historical fiction.

However, as we mentioned above, "what happens in the wild" and "what have to be happen in the life of human and society" are very different. Therefore, the history of nature and the history of humanity should be evaluated completely differently.

In nature, things that people see as bad and painful (natural evil), is not evil absolutely and in essence itself (bi-zātih). Their evil is relative and nothing more than the absence of goodness (non existential evil).⁸³ When they serve the realization of the good, they become ex-

⁸³ In this respect, according to Muslim philosophers, evil is divided into two:

Existential evil (al-sharr al-wujūdī) has a positive existence in reality and it is created by God.

As contrary to it, **non existential evil** (al-sharr al-'adamī) has no existence created by God in external world, but it is conceptualised in mind, to refering to there is no goodness. For example, consider a pitcher that is half full of clean water. The fact that it is half full is an existential good. But the fact that the other half is not full is a nominal evil. It is not an evil that exists in reality but rather the absence of good. Here, the only thing that can be spoken of its existence is half a jug of clean water.

To speak of non existential evil is not to speak of the absence of evil. For, as an abstraction, non existential (nominal) evil points to something that exists in the

istential (i.e. that has existence in reality) goodness. As for the evils (moral evils) that are the achievement of man, the only responsible for them is human. Because he is free, and this freedom a prerequisite of that his behavior has an ethic value (bad or good). In addition, human beings have conscience, sense of responsibility and the potential for goodness in their essence.

Evolutionist scientists and thinkers, especially Darwin, said that one of the fundamental dynamics of evolution is the "struggle for survival". Then, they argued that as in wild nature, in the human society also the well-built and strong individuals should survive, the weak ones should die, and the society should continue from well-built individuals as their progeny. They even opposed religion and traditional charities. This is because the philanthropy that religion encourages helps weak people to survive, which slows down human evolution. This is one of the points where religions and the secular-evolutionist approach differ. While the secular-evolutionist view envisages conveying what is in wild nature to the society, Islam, distinguishes between

- "*wild nature*" and "*society*",

- "*natural life*" and "*human-civilized life*". It directs people to the second of these, namely humanitarian, civilized and moral. Yesterday's secular-evolutionist thinking, today's "post-humanist" approach, recommends leaving people, especially African societies, to their desperation in the face of natural disasters (and results of exploitation to which they had been exposed).

The fact that Islam does not distinguish between religious affairs and worldly affairs prevents people from evaluating their activities purely by their economic value or by their results occurred here and now (i.e. secular).

Islam evaluates every realm of human life within the scope of five decrees (al-ahkām al-taklīfiyyah,) regarding the responsibility of

mind and constitutes one of the answers - but not a general answer- to the problem of evil. Contrary, speaking of the absence of evil does not constitute an answer to the problem of evil.

human towards Allah. No action of a person falls outside these five propositional provisions: obligatory (wājib), recommended (mandūb), permissible (mubāh), disliked (makrūh), and prohibited (harām). These five decrees provides to evaluate every behavior of oneself, including his relations with nature, in terms of religion and morality. A person must do what is obligatory (wājib) like to behavior to a living according to it's nature. He must abandon the unlawful (harām), like to harm. As for mubah (halāl), he is free.

The divine regulation established through these Islamic decrees is also the source of rights and responsibilities in human relations with the environment. So much so that the Almighty Allah is both a "party" and a "witness" in man's relations with his environment:

*"...God is witness to everything."*⁸⁴

*"...[God is the Mighty, the Praiseworthy] to whom all control over the heavens and earth belongs: God is witness over all things."*⁸⁵

Allah is the third party in human relationships with the environment, just as He is the third party who is next to two people talking secretly among themselves. He is "a party" to every case because He is the agent of the party whose right has been violated. He is "the witness" because He knows a person's intentions; He hears their whisper or spoken words and sees all their actions. He is "the judge" because, He is the ultimate authority who will question the person about his intentions, words and actions and who decides on his case. When someone violates the rights of a fellow human being, they simultaneously transgress the rights of God and when they harm people or animals directly or indirectly in their interactions with the environment, they also violate the rights of God and His creation. In other words, it is God's law that surrounds human life. The fact that man has not been created in vain and not been left stray and rambling also points to this reality:

⁸⁴ 4/al-Nisā, 33.

⁸⁵ 85/al-Shūrā, 9.

"Does man think he will be left alone?"⁸⁶

The origin of all human rights and responsibilities is the divine will. Man's responsibilities towards both his social and natural environment are included in the circle of "**huqūqullāh** (i.e. the rights of Allah)" and are based on Allah's commands. When a person violates the rights of a servant of Allah, he also violates "huqūqullāh" and "**hudūdullāh** (i.e. the bounds/limits set by God)".⁸⁷ Likewise, when a person directly or indirectly harms people or animals in his relations with the environment, he violates "huqūqullāh" and "hudūdullāh". This means that the concepts of huqūqullāh and hudūdullāh encompass all areas of life and fundamentally change people's relations with the environment.

In all religions, especially in Islam, morality also encompasses man's relations with nature. When we look at the hadith books,⁸⁸ it is seen that Islamic decrees and morality do not exclude human-nature relations. In some hadiths, it is said that the Prophet (pbuh)⁸⁹ has understood the language of animals and warned people about animals' pain and problems. Therefore, in order to reveal all aspects of Islamic moral values, it is necessary to examine them in four different categories:

- Human's relationship with God,
- Human's relationship with himself,
- Human's relationship with other people,
- Human's relationship with nature.

Therefore, Islam demands that people be in a certain discipline in

⁸⁶ 75/al-Qiyāme, 36.

⁸⁷ See and consider on the verses following:

"...These are the bounds set by God: do not overstep them. It is those who overstep Gods bounds who are doing wrong." (2/al-Baqarah, 229.)

"... These are the limits set by God whoever oversteps Gods limits wrongs his own soul..." (al-Talaq, 65/1.)

⁸⁸ **Hadith** (حديث). The saying of The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the narrative of his act or of his acceptance an act.

⁸⁹ **bpuh**: Blessings and peace be upon him.

their efforts to achieve their physiological needs and in all kinds of relations with nature. He orders people to behave responsibly at all times, without making any distinction between religious and worldly affairs. Therefore, from the point of view of Islam, every act oriented to make the world more beautiful has a religious value, provided that the intention is good. Thus, one of hadists (Sayings) of the Last Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is like below:

“Even if the Resurrection were established upon one of you while he has in his hand a sapling, let him plant it.”⁹⁰

This hadith reflects the view of that the life is a whole through-going from the world life and the hereafter. To define the world as the cultivation field to harvest in hereafter; Preparing for the hereafter but not neglecting the necessities of worldly life is an expression of this understanding. This understanding plays an important role in the shaping of people's view of nature and life and in the grounding of environmental morality. Because preparing for the hereafter is not with-drawal from the world. Therefore, a Muslim individual cannot neglect the world in its individual or social aspect while working for the hereafter. Because the distinction between religious affairs and worldly affairs has no place in Islamic thought. Building the world also means building the home of the hereafter. In order to built environment and make the world flourish, humans should use the knowledge provided by various sciences, especially ecology, "with a moral sensitivity".

In addition, the hadith mentioned above can be interpreted as the fact that planting trees in Islam has a religious value per se. Because at the time of the apocalypse i.e. Neither the inhabitants of the earth nor future generations can benefit from a tree planted the day of the apocalypse. In that case, according to the hadith, the benefit of this action to man will be completely in the Hereafter. In other words, an action done to beautify the world has a religious value (taqwā, merit, piousness) and its reward in the hereafter. In other words, it can be said that planting trees has a religious value in itself.

5.1. CONCEPTS OF WORSHIP AND CHARITY

Islam does not only lead people to rituals and forms of worship such as prayer (salāh), fasting (sawm), almsgiving (zakāt) and pilgrimage (hajj). Besides the forms of worship, it also dwells on good deeds (sālih amal). A remarkable area of good deed that we can call "behavior worthy of faith" is human-nature relations, that is, human's ecological behavior. As a matter of fact, the Prophet of Islam (pbuh) says:

*"There is none amongst the Muslims who plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it, but is regarded as a charitable gift for him."*⁹¹

This hadith is a manifestation of the importance given not only to green lung in cities, but also to protecting the whole ecological balance, ecological sensitivity and encouragement to create environmental awareness. It is understood from the hadith that the concept of charity in Islam also has an ecological dimension. Charity includes not only financial aid to the poor, but also working to be useful to other living beings on earth. As a matter of fact, the Prophet of Islam (pbuh) says:

"There are seven deeds that will continue being recorded for a person after his death:

- *He who conveyed knowledge,*
- *He who caused a spring to flow,*
- *He who dug a water well from which people drink,*
- *He who planed tree,*
- *He who built a mosque (masjid),*

⁹⁰ Baihaqī, *Sunen al-Baihaqī*, II, 184.

⁹¹ Bukhārī, "Hars" 1, "Adab" 27; Muslim, "Musāqāt", 7, 10, 12; Tirmidhī, "Ah-kām" 40. This translation was taken from <https://sunnah.com/Bukhārī:2320>

- He who gave a copy of the Holy Qur'an as inheritance,

- He who left a child who seeks for forgiveness for him after his death.⁹²

According to this hadith, planting a tree is an "Ongoing charity (al-sadaqah al-jāriyah)" that gains people rewards even after their death.

5.2. ECOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONCEPTS OF SĪN AND MERĪT

Religion does not reject the basic moral concepts of "good" and "evil". On the contrary, it adds the concepts of "merit (good deed)" and "sin" to them. Merit (Sawāb/Thawāb, ثواب) and "sin (khatī'ah خطيئة; junāh, جناح)" express "the responsibility of man in front of God" and "the otherworldly reward or punishment". Thus, a behavior what is useful and good becomes a subject of the responsibilities of the servant of God. The strengthening of moral values with theological values encourages the ecological approach more.

5.3. ISLAM: PEACE AND HARMONY

Allah has given an orderliness to the creatures in nature and set certain laws. It has given human beings a set of features (fitrah) that enables them to live in harmony with both the purpose of existence and the natural order. Chaos ensues when these are not complied. For this reason, it is necessary to avoid both dulling the innate characteristics of man and the extremes that will harm himself or his environment. In other words, the natural characteristics of human beings

⁹² Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, Musnad, V, 415.

should be channeled in legitimate and humane directions.

A person who moves away from his spiritual-civilized nature (fitrah) cannot live in harmony with nature. As long as man obeys the divine orders, he will be at peace with his own spiritual nature and with rhythms of the universe. Because the creative will that rules the field of creation is the same will (the will of Allah) that is religious lawmaker regarding the human voluntarily acts. Thus, The Qur'an states that everything in the universe surrenders to Allah:

*Then He turned to the sky, which was smoke. He said to it and the earth, Come into being, willingly or not, and they both said, We come willingly.*⁹³

*"...Everyone in the heavens and earth submits to Him, willingly or unwillingly; they will all be returned to Him...."*⁹⁴

Accordingly, the universe is " مُسْلِمٌ , *Muslim* (i.e. surrendering [the person who surrenders to Allah sincerely and with all his/her being])". Because all beings in the universe, except human beings, naturally surrender to the divine will. Man, too, must surrender to God through his consciously and voluntary actions. Just as man fulfills the divine orders in the field of creation with the involuntary movements of his physiology, he must also voluntarily fulfill the divine orders in the field of liability. Thus, he will be at peace with his human- spiritual nature (fitrah) and with the natural world and with the society. For this reason, living in accordance with the divine message is also an ecological lifestyle. Otherwise, human falls into an alienation. In state of this alienation, man's world of values and lifestyle are determined by the technologies they produce. The individual cannot go out of the consumption cycle, which has become a value in modern society, and tries to fulfillment his identity with what he consumes.

It should be noted here that there is a very close relationship be-

⁹³ 41/al-Fussilat, 11.

⁹⁴ 3/Al-i Īmrān, 83.

tween ecological order and social justice, between social peace and peace with nature. The absence of social justice and the conflicts that feeds of social injustice and feeds on it do great harm not only to people, but also to nature and the future of humanity. Therefore, it can be said that the same concept refers to natural balance and social justice in the Qur'an:

*The sun and the moon follow their calculated courses;
the planets and the trees submit to His designs; He has
raised up the sky. He has set the balance so that you may
not exceed in the balance: weigh with justice and do not
fall short in the balance..⁹⁵*

In these verses where the concept of "Mīzān (ميزان)" is repeated three times, it would be that the concept of "Mīzān" refers to the cosmic order and ecological balance, the laws of natural order that ensure this, as well as justice and measuring instrument. Today, most Muslim researchers say that the word "al-wazn" in these verses can be given the meaning of "natural harmony, ecological balance" in terms of its context. But the most striking thing is that while the cosmic balance and order of beings are mentioned in the verses, it is ordered to keep the measure (al-wazn) with justice and not to cheat in scale. This commandment states that balance is required in everything; It implies that is scientific cannot be isolated from that is the moral and that is the environmental problems from the social problems.

It has been mentioned that there are three types of Mīzān:

1) The first is the mind. Through it useful things and useless things, righteous deeds and bad behavior are known.

2) Secondly, it is the scale, which is a measurement tool created for people to pay the other party's rights fully and to receive their own rights in full.

⁹⁵ Al-Rahmān 55/5-9.

3) The third is the mizān that will be created in the hereafter in order to give full rewards and punishments for deeds.⁹⁶

On the Day of Judgment, in the scale of justice, all attitudes and behaviors of human towards his Lord, towards the integrity of own fitrah, towards his social environment, towards its natural environment will be evaluated. In this world, human behavior that protects or harms the balance in nature will also be measured in the scale of justice.

Therefore, to the three meanings of Mīzān mentioned above, in our opinion, it is necessary to add the meanings of "the order encoded into existence by Allah in creation and the laws that ensure the ecological balance". In fact, there are laws of balance in the universe that ensure the orderly course of all beings and occurrences. For example, today's *"inflationary universe model"* talks about two factors that keep the entire cosmos safe from collapse,⁹⁷ disintegration, and chaos:

1. **The expansion of the universe** since the initial big bang. This law of gravitation prevents masses from collapsing into themselves.

2. **The law of gravity.** This keeps the expansion in balance and prevents the masses from disintegrating and breaking apart.

Expansion and gravity are like the invisible pillars that hold up the heavens, which are created in layers:

"It is God who raised up the heavens with no visible supports and then established Himself on the throne; He has subjected the sun and the moon each to pursue its

⁹⁶ al-Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*, XIV, 257.

⁹⁷ "Collapse is the contraction of an astronomical object due to the influence of its own gravity, which tends to draw matter inward toward the centre of gravity." Gravitational Collapse, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gravitational_collapse [access date: 17 July 2022]

*course for an appointed time...*⁹⁸

Expansion and gravity form a balance that ensures the continuation of the cosmological order, almost like two pans on the scales. The "mīzān" of nature is cosmic balance, the golden ratio in beings and the ecological cycle. The "mīzān" of society is moral principles and law. In other words, the justice of the field of creation is "measure and balance"; the measure and balance of the social sphere is "justice".

From the point of view of Islam, peace is that is normal, essential, substantive, humane and moral. War is abnormal status and breaking the peace is cruelty. War is legal as self-defense against attacks. However, it is not legitimate to harm civilians and nature in war.

⁹⁸ 13/al-Ra'd, 3.

5.4. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ABSOLUTE OWNERSHIP AND BEING A BAILEE

In Islam, Allah is the sole and absolute owner of everything. This truth means that human private property is not absolute property, and the right of property is not limitless and aimless. Private property is the result of man's being "*the caliph on earth*" and consists of appropriation, using and making transactions within the framework permitted by Allah, the real and absolute owner of property. More clearly, the property is a trust given by God to human. In fact, not only the nature, but also human's mind, conscience and other abilities and various possibilities are entrusted to him by God. Human beings cannot use them for the purpose of harming the social and natural environment. Besides, if the environment is damaged as a result of his actions, even unintentionally, he must compensate for this damage.

Nature is not the absolute property of anyone but Allah. He is God's grace to all ages past, present and future. It has been presented not only to the present generation or to certain groups that wield power and technology, but to all humanity, including future generations. Nature is the common heritage of humanity; environmental right is the right of both present and future generations. The expression '*for you* (لَكُمْ)' in the verse "*It was He who created all that is on the earth for you...*"⁹⁹ does not mean the generation of the time when the verse was revealed, but all generations of humanity. As a matter of fact, The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has said: "*Muslims are partners in three things: in water, pastures and fire.*"¹⁰⁰ The hadith also gives the concept of the common heritage of humanity. Since Allah is the real and final owner of all the universe, humans are also in the position of trustee and depositary. For this reason, the individual cannot see the earth as a property that he can dispose of as he wishes. Accordingly, it cannot deprive people of the things that belong to all

⁹⁹ 2/al-Baqarah, 29.

¹⁰⁰ Abu Dāwūd, "Buyū" 62; Ibn Mājah, "Ruhūn" 16.

human beings, such as water, air, grassland, and energy resources in the universe. Therefore, being sensitive to the rights of Allah's servants also requires being sensitive to the environment.

One of the main features of the Islamic approach is that the earth was created not only for humans, but for all living things:

"(He has laid out the earth for His [all] creatures.."101

Accordingly, people should protect the ecological order not only for humans but also for the sake of biodiversity in nature. Man's relationship with nature should be in such a way that the biodiversity is not ignored and the factors of the ecosystem are not neglected. This style of behavior in line with moral values will be just and ecological as much as it is Islamic.

Of course, man has the abilities to change his natural environment, and it is normal for him to use the abilities given to him by Allah for this purpose. This is a consequence of man's becoming "caliph on earth". We cannot expect him to live like other beings not having moral responsibility. Moreover, the instincts of other beings in nature are not as destructive and extreme as the instincts of a human being that he do not control. Therefore, while man is working over the natural environment, he should not only use his intelligence and strength, but also his mind, conscience and ability to love, which are the most important abilities given to him by Allah, and should shape his behavior with value judgments such as good and bad. He should evaluate his actions not according to his selfish wishes and interests, but according to whether they serve the realization of the good and the beautiful.

¹⁰¹ 55/al-Rahmān 10.

5.5. CONCEPTS OF JUSTICE AND CRUELTY

In Islam, the concepts of justice and persecution emphasize the idea that humans should act in harmony with nature, especially by avoiding behaviors that go against the inherent characteristics of other creatures on Earth.

The root of the concept of "ظلم" (i.e. cruelty, persecution) has primarily two meanings:

Firstly, it means the absence of light. In this sense, persecution denotes ignorance, polytheism, and transgression, which are opposite to the revelation, faith, and the light of Islam, as exemplified in the Quranic verse: "*...Is darkness equal to the light?..*"¹⁰²

The second meaning of the concept involves "placing something from its proper place to another place either by reduction or addition on it, or by altering its time and place."¹⁰³ In this sense, the concept of persecution also encompasses the improper use of natural entities contrary to their inherent characteristics and existential purposes.

This analysis of the concept leads us to the following conclusion: It is an ethical principle in Islam to use every asset in a manner consistent with purpose of creation of it and to behavior to every livings in accordance with their nature and not to utilize nature in a way that contradicts its essential function and inherit characteristics.

5.5.1. PRINCIPLE OF RESPECT FOR "RIGHTS OF GOD'S SERVANTS"

Despite all the distinctive qualities and superiority of man, his relations with nature are not one-sided. On the contrary, the privileged place of man in the schema of beings necessitates him to be religiously and morally responsible. He is not stray and rambling; on the

¹⁰² 13/Ra'd, 16.

¹⁰³ İṣḫāhānī, *al-Mufradāt*, 470-471; Kalābāzī, *al-Taarruf*, 51.

contrary, he is responsible to Allah in his relations with nature as he is in his relations with other people.

According to the Mu'tazilite theologian Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār, if one creature causes another to suffer, Allah will take the 'awd' (عَوَض, compensation) that the sufferer deserves from which causes to suffer and give it to the sufferer.¹⁰⁴ According to this, it is a higher priority and more certain truth that humans are held responsible for the damage they cause to non-human creatures. This view extends the concept of "the rights of God's servants" to man's relationship with other living things on earth. In the hadith, Allah's Messenger (bpuh) said to The Companions there:

— *Do you know who is poor?*

The Companions of the Holy Prophet said:

— *A poor man amongst us is one who has neither dirham with him nor wealth. He (the Holy Prophet) said:*

— *The poor of my Umma would be he who would come on the Day of Resurrection with prayers and fasts and Zakāt but (he would find himself bankrupt on that day as he would have exhausted his funds of virtues) since he hurled abuses upon others, brought calumny against others and unlawfully consumed the wealth of others and shed the blood of others and beat others, and his virtues would be credited to the account of one (who suffered at his hand). And if his good deeds fall short to clear the account, then his sins would be entered in (his account) and he would be thrown in the Hell-Fire..*¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār ibn Ahmad al-Asadābādī, *Sharh al-Usūl al-Khamsah*, 504-505.

The understanding of Ta'wīd (or awd) is more emphatic in respecting the rights of non-human beings in human-nature relations. However, Mu'tazila's views on this subject (that called sam'iyyāt, and known through the divine message) also include speculative explanations that do not rely on the verses and hadiths. Besides, Mu'tezilah asserts that there are certain obligatory for Allah in the field of action and judge (See Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharh al-Usūl al-Khamsah*, 504.).

¹⁰⁵ Muslim, "Bir", 59, 60; Tirmidhī, "Qiyāmah", 2. The translation of the hadith is taken from <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2581>

In another hadith, He (bpuh) said that a woman will be tormented in the afterlife because of a cat which she had imprisoned and had starved it to death.¹⁰⁶

5.5.2. PRINCIPLE OF THE AVOIDING FROM TO HARM

One of the universal principles laid down by Islam is "*do no harm*". As a matter of fact, The Prophet Muhammad (bpuh) has said: "*There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm.*"¹⁰⁷ That is to say, Muslim shouldn't harm to others intentionally or indirectly, and he shouldn't be harm from others. This principle includes respecting the right to life of not only people but also other inhabitants of the earth and maintaining order.

5.5.3. PRINCIPLE OF AVOIDING FROM POLLUTING

One of the conditions for maintaining the ecological order is to avoid polluting the environment. Environmental cleanliness has an important place in also the Islamic understanding of cleanliness.¹⁰⁸

Environmental cleanliness is also emphasized in the hadiths of the Prophet of Islam (bpuh). According to his hadiths the earth is a masjid; when there is no water, the soil is tahūr (clean and cleaner).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Bukhārī, *Bad' al-Khalq*, 16.

¹⁰⁷ ibn Mājah, *al-Ahkām*, 33 (Hadith number 2340).

¹⁰⁸ In Islam, both spiritual purity and material cleanliness are commanded. Material cleanliness is not only a necessity in itself but also a step and spiritually preparatory act for spiritual purity. For example, the Prophet of Islam (pbuh) said: "*The key to Salat is the purification...*" (Abū Dāwūd, "Tahārah", 31; Tirmidhī, "Tah ārah", 3.)

"*No Salat is accepted without Wudu' (purification)...*" (Muslim, "Tahārah", 1; Tirmidhī, "Tahārah", 1.)

From these hadiths, we can conclude that material cleanliness is a step towards spiritual purity.

¹⁰⁹ See Muslim, "Masājīd", 4.

Therefore, we can reach the conclusion that the place to be prayed must be clean and it is necessary to pay attention to the cleanliness of the environment.

H. Muhammad forbade people from polluting the stagnant waters, waterways, busy roads, and the shade where people sit for rest and fresh air.¹¹⁰ According to a rumor, the Prophet of Islam stated that it is a sin for a person to cut a non-proprietary lote-tree, where travelers and animals benefit from its shade.¹¹¹ This means that destroying the environment and ecological system today is a sin (in proportion to the magnitude of the damage. Because it causes serious dangers and damages to health and life of human and other souls.

Another hadith of the Prophet (bpuh) encouraging to keep the environment clean is as follows:

*"While a man was on the way, he found a thorny branch of a tree there on the way and removed it. Allah wanted to reward him for that deed and forgave him."*¹¹²

According to a rumor by Abu Barza al-Aslami, he said, "Messenger of Allah, show me an action by which I will enter the Jannah!" The Prophet (bpuh) said, "Remove harmful things from people's path."¹¹³ This behavior, This behavior is described as "sadaqah (charity)" in the following:

*"...To remove a harmful thing from the way is also Sadaqah."*¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Bukhārī, Wudū, 68; Muslim, Tahārah, 95; Abu Dawūd, Tahārah, 14, 36; Tirmidhī, Tahārah, 51; Nesāī, Tahārah, 46.

¹¹¹ Abu Dāwūd, "Adab", 171.

¹¹² Bukhārī, "Madhālim", 28, "Jamā'ah", 32; Muslim, "Birr", 128, "Imārah", 163; Tirmidhī, "Birr", 38.

¹¹³ Bukhārī, Al-Adab Al-Mufrad (Good Conduct), 228.

¹¹⁴ Bukhārī, "Jihād", 128,

5.5.4. CONCEPTS OF AL-IQTISĀD (TEMPERANCE, MODERATION) AND AL-WASAT (MIDDLE WAY)

Islam orders people to be far from extremism, moderation, balanced and in the middle path, starting from the field of belief, to their private life, social sphere and civilization scale. Truth is incompatible with exaggeration and extremist mindset. On the axis of a lifestyle based on reason, science and truth, there are the principles of moderation, balance and middle way instead of exorbitance and extremism. Also man's approach to nature should be like this both in terms of mentality and in terms of practice. For example, human beings should work both to raise their spirituality and morality and to reconstruct the world, and while doing this, they should adhere to the "middle way" principle. Otherwise, both the spirituality and lifestyle of people and the order in nature will be damaged. As a matter of fact, while man uses machines to conquer nature, the technologies he has produced and used as a result of his alienation to his spiritual self have taken him under his captivity. As well as he could not conquer the nature, the artificial world he produced began to enslave him.

In this process, the philosophy of life of modern man, who lost the meaning and existential purpose of life and whose personality became fragmented, became the motto of "*produce more, consume more*". People have shifted their primary goal away from developing their mind and ability to love. They have thrown themselves as tools within the machinery of the economy they've built. Man has no longer been striving for his own happiness or the growth of his soul, but only for efficiency and success.¹¹⁵ Now, the meaning of life, hu-

¹¹⁵ Fromm, Erich, *Psikanaliz ve Din [Psychoanalysis and Religion]*, translated to Turkish by Aydın Arıtan, Arıtan Yayinevi, 3rd printing, Istanbul, 1993, s. 132.

The following observations of Eric Fromm are also quite remarkable:

"Modern man is alienated from himself, from his fellow men, and from nature. He has been transformed into a commodity, experiences his life forces as an investment which must bring him the maximum profit obtainable under existing market conditions." Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1956), 86.

man and self-actualization has changed. Good life has begun to be defined as the life in which an individual attracts the most attention with his differences, has more, gets the most profit, and therefore gets the maximum share from consumption. From now on, "Modern consumers may identify themselves by the formula: *I am = what I have and what I consume.*"¹¹⁶

People have come to learn their needs not by experiencing through life, but from suggestions, advertisements and showcases. A person's ignorance of the needs imposed on the society, and not having and not using technological products that are seen as a necessity is characterized as not being able to adapt to the society (an anti-social sign). For example, not having a television at home and not using social media is seen as a negative quality. Eric Fromm describes this situation with the following lines:

"Modern capitalism needs men who co-operate smoothly and in large numbers; who want to consume more and more; and whose tastes are standardized and can be easily influenced and anticipated."¹¹⁷

This understanding of life, which makes finding, marketing and selling new things its sole purpose, has rendered human life sterile and turned its values upside down. Because this purpose has made man an instrument of the market.

However, the understanding of that all the world is a safety deposit by God, means that human activities in Nature are based on responsibility; It requires people to meet their needs without harming

"...people are motivated by mass suggestion, their aim is producing more and consuming more, as purposes in themselves. All activities are subordinated to economic goals, means have become ends..." Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, 132-133.

¹¹⁶ Erich Fromm, *To Have Or To Be?*, Continuum publications, London & New York, 2008, 23.

¹¹⁷ Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1956), 85. (https://archive.org/stream/TheArtOfLoving/43799393-The-Art-of-Loving-Erich-Fromm_djvu.txt [access date: 22 June 2022])

nature and not to consume them without need. Because everything taken from nature has a price.

From the point of view of Islam, people should use the beings around them that naturally fulfill the functions determined by Allah and glorify Allah, out of a need of people and in accordance with the purpose of their creation. On the contrary, it is cruelty and unrighteousness (al-zulm, ظُلم) to misuse and waste them. As a matter of fact, the Qur'an refers to those who spend to show off and vilifies those who boast saying "*I have consumed great wealth.*".¹¹⁸ And Qur'an forbids wasting and extravagancing in their spending¹¹⁹ while being stingy in giving the needy people their due (i.e. zakāt that is obligatory charity) and it foresees the middle way between stinginess and waste.¹²⁰

In the studies on the causes of environmental problems, the limited resources in nature and the excess of the human population are often mentioned as the primary problem of . It is emphasized that the rapid increase in the human population will make a series of environmental problems, especially famine, inextricable in the near future. However, countries with high population are not countries with high consumption. The party that is primarily responsible for the consumption of natural resources and polluting the environment is the countries with low population and slow population growth . The most concrete proof of this is the excessive increasing of consumption in countries whose populations remain the same or are declining. on the other hand, as detailed earlier, the claim of overpopulation often gives the courage to expose egocentric and anti-human ideas in the name of ecocentrism, biocentrism or nature-centrism. The idea that famine, hunger, misery, diseases caused by malnutrition and the epidemic are from elements of the ecosystem are part of this disclosure.

¹¹⁸ 90/al-Balad, 6.

¹¹⁹ 6/al-An'ām, 141. Also see 7/al-A'rāf 31.

¹²⁰ 25/Al-Furkān, 67. Also see 17/Al-Isrā 29.

5.5.5. COMPASSION TO ALL LIVING BEINGS

The leaven of the dough of life and creation is love. Almighty Allah is "al-Wadud". He surrounded the universe with his compassion and love; He gave it out of divine love to man, who is the eye's apple of all universe and core of the cosmos (zubdah al-A'lam). The divine love is discovered through life. In that case, human being should see this love and compassion in the diversity of living things in nature and in the network of ecological relations and he should also approach nature with love, compassion and care.

In the eyes of the Prophet of Islam, the tree has a special place in bio-diversity. When the Prophet (bpuh) came to the Zuraib location while returning from the Dhu-Qarad Battle, members of the Banu Hārīse tribe from the Ansar said:

— O Messenger of Allah! This is the pasture of our camels, the pasture of our sheep, the place where our women will come out, that is, the grove.

Thereupon, the Messenger of Allah (bpuh) said:

— *Whoever cuts down a tree, let him plant a seedling in exchange for it.*

Upon this order, the Zuraib location was turned into a forest.¹²¹

The fact that the Prophet of Islam lived in a region where green areas and forests are scarce has also been influential in his giving importance to vegetation and trees as a human being. He particularly encouraged tree planting:

*There is none amongst the Muslims who plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it, but is regarded as a charitable gift for him.*¹²²

Never does a Muslim plants a tree except that he has

¹²¹ al-Balāzurī, *Futūh al-Buldān*, thk. Abdullah Unais al-Tabbā', 'Umer Unais al-Tabbā', Muassasah al-Maārif, Bairut, 1407/1987, I, 17.

¹²² Bukhārī, "Muzāra'a" 1 (2320).

*the reward of charity for him, for what is eaten out of that is charity; what is stolen out of that, what the beasts eat out of that, what the birds eat out of that is charity for him. (In short) none incurs a loss to him but it becomes a charity on his part.*¹²³

In this hadith, it is seen that while planting trees is directly encouraged, kindness done to other living things is considered as charity and encouraged indirectly. The historical events that took place explain this hadith much better. One of these events is "*The Great Sparrow Campaign*" that was part of "*The Four Pests Campaign*".

In 1955, Mao Zedong was in a rural farming village to plan for "The Great Leap Forward". When Mao spotted a sparrow pecking on rice, Mao called it a harmful bird to China's agriculture and ordered the people to go forth and kill all the sparrows. Therefore, citizens were encouraged to make loud noise around trees so that sparrows cannot rest on the trees. People used pots, pans, and drums to make noise and scared the sparrows and resulted in them falling from the sky from exhaustion. Moreover, people torn birds' nests apart, broken eggs and killed fledglings. Chinese people killed millions of sparrows until 1962. But, the removal of sparrows from the ecosystem led to unintended ecological consequences, and the void in the ecosystem's predator-prey balance. As a matter of fact, The National Academy of Sciences reported that sparrows eat more insects than grain. Now, the sparrows, it seemed, didn't eat any grain seeds, but, they didn't eat insects also. Because there are no birds to keep them under control, populations of insects, particularly population of locusts boomed. Locusts, swarmed over the country, have began eat everything they could find and lead to food shortages.¹²⁴

It was too late when the government realized the important role of sparrows in pest control and successful agricultural harvests. Ecological balance had been disordered. The government ended immedi-

¹²³ Muslim, "Musāqāt", 7.

¹²⁴ Platt, John, "The Great Sparrow Campaign Was the Start of the Greatest Mass Starvation in History", www.treehugger.com/the-great-sparrow-campaign-was-the-start-of-the-greatest-mass-4864032 (July 30, 2019)

ately the campaign of killing sparrows. But, it had no contribution to prevent the Great Famine that had boomed.¹²⁵ Chinese people ran out of things to eat, and millions of them starved. According to estimates that realized by scholars, when the famine ended, between 15 and 36 million individuals had died due to starvation.¹²⁶ The Great Chinese Famine, despite causing the deaths of millions, still did not affect Mao and the people around him.¹²⁷

Comparing this event with some hadiths from 1443 years ago will clarify the ecological approach of Islam. In these hadiths, it is considered "charity (sadaqah)" that fruitworms and birds has eat from what a person has planted or growed, and it is emphasized that people earn otherworldly rewards from it. Abdullah bin Mas'ud, one of the scholar companions of the Prophet, narrates:

We were with the Messenger of Allah (bpuh) in a journey. Sometime when he drew apart. we saw a red bird which had two chicks with it. We caught them and the red mother bird came, beating the earth with its wings. In the meantime the Prophet (bpuh) returned and said,

*— Who has hurt the feelings of this bird by taking its chicks? Return them to her.*¹²⁸

¹²⁵ "The Four Pests Campaign: Objectives, Execution, Failure, And Consequences", www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-four-pests-campaign-objectives-execution-failure-and-consequences.html

¹²⁶ Platt, John, "The Great Sparrow Campaign...", www.

¹²⁷ Let's also point out here that information about this event is tried to be censored based on the newly released "right to be forgotten". But nature does not forget, history does not.

¹²⁸ Riyād as-Sālihīn, hadith number: 1610. <https://sunnah.com/search?q=bird> ; <https://www.islamicveg.org/hadith/>

Another rumor is:

The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, stopped in a place and then someone took a bird's eggs and the bird began to beat its wings around the head of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. He asked, "Which of you has taken its eggs?" A man said, "Messenger of Allah, I have taken its eggs." The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Return them out off mercy to the bird." Bukhārī, Al-Adab Al-Mufrad,

In addition, the Qur'an puts the principle of "*not hurting even an ant*".¹²⁹ While describing the event that The Prophet Solomon's (Peace be upon him) passage through a valley with a large army, he gives an indirect message that the principle of "no harming" covers all living things:

*And when they [Solomon -peace be upon him- and his army] came to the Valley of the Ants, one ant said: "Ants! Go into your homes, in case Solomon and his hosts unwittingly crush you."*¹³⁰

The expression "*unwittingly*" in the verse indicates that believers will not harm and injure even ants on purpose and advertently, even if they are in a large army and that they will approach (and should approached) with compassion towards all living things, no matter how small.

The basis of the ecological approach is to know plants and animals as "living" and to be in a life-enhancing relationship with nature. Thus, The Prophet of Islam also has often stated that approaching animals with compassion is an important religious-moral virtue. He (bpuh) emphasized that there is a reward in hereafter for a good deed done for every living being.¹³¹ He (bpuh) has encouraged people with concrete examples in this regard. According to a conveying by Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him):

While a man was walking on his way he became extremely thirsty. He found a well, he went down into it to drink water. Upon leaving it, he saw a dog which was panting out of thirst. His tongue was lolling out and he was eat-

382.

¹²⁹ There is an aphorism attributed to the great poet Fudhūlī:
*"Karıncayı bile incitmem deme! 'Bile'den incinir karınca;
 Söz söylemek irfan ister, anlamak insan"*

That is say: "Don't say, 'I wouldn't hurt even an ant!' Because, the word 'even' can be hurt an ant. Hence, speaking requires wisdom, insighting requires humanity."

¹³⁰ 27/al-Naml, 18.

¹³¹ Bukhārī, "Mezālīm", 23, "Adab", 27; Müslim, "Salām", 153; Abū Dāwūd, "Jihād", 47.

ing moist earth from extreme thirst. The man thought to himself: 'This dog is extremely thirsty as I was.' So he descended into the well, filled up his leather sock with water, and holding it in his teeth, climbed up and quenched the thirst of the dog. Allah appreciated his action and forgave his sins.

The Companions asked:

Shall we be rewarded for showing kindness to the animals also?

He (bpuh) said:

*A reward is given in connection with every living creature.*¹³²

The Prophet of Islam forbade the believers from using anything with a soul as a target.¹³³

The moral attitude that developed based on the advice of Muhammad (bpuh) was exemplified by a Companion as follows:

*"When we alighted at a station (for stay), we did not pray until we unloaded the burdens of the camels."*¹³⁴

The basis of the ecological approach is to know the living thing as beings that have soul and feelings. Thus, in a poem by the sufi poet Yunus Emre who is mentioned earlier, it is emphasized that approaching all beings in nature with love and compassion is a duty to-

¹³² Riyād al-Sālihīn, *Numerous ways of doing Good [Bab baian kathrah turuq al-khair]*, 126, The translation of the hadith extracted from <https://sunnah.com/riyadussalihin:126>.

¹³³ al-Nasāi, "al-Dahāya", 41.

¹³⁴ Abu Dāwūd, "al-Jihād", 48.

Islam teaches that among the religious and moral responsibilities of individuals are the following:

- Caring for the needs of the animals they benefit from, providing them with food, water, and shelter.
- Using animals when necessary but not overburdening them, allowing them opportunities for rest and meeting their needs for rest.
- Taking care of the well-being of animals and seeking treatment for them when they are sick.
- Treating animals in a manner that is in accordance with their nature, not to persecute or not to cause them suffering.

wards Allah:

“Who dosen't valuate to all creatures as equal,
even if he is a scholar in society, he is rebellious to-
wards God.”¹³⁵

In Islam, environmental ethics exist as an extension of a moral framework that encompasses all of life and is based on the fundamental rules regulating the relationships between individuals and their Creator. In other words, Islamic environmental ethic are a part of the same morality that establishes the obligatories of individuals towards their Creator, fellow individuals in their social environment, and their own selves. All of these obligations are rooted in faith and worldview. Therefore, Islamic environmental ethic isn't separated from the frame that includes a believer's faith, mindset, and the principles through which social affairs, and international affairs of a Muslim society's is regulated. From this perspective, individuals' participation in environmental protection policies may be considered as an integral component of the Islamic ethic that regulate their relationships with the physical and social environment. As long as it has regulated its relations with the natural environment, social environment, and The Holy Creator within the same principles and values, an individual cannot remain indifferent to political ecology. A believer must to assess environmental policies by leveraging the data of political ecology and strive to create new policies instead of mere imitation. In summary, religion offers a comprehensive system of beliefs, values, and principles that fundamentally transform an individual's relationships with their environment, without isolating any aspect of their life from it.

¹³⁵ “Cümle yaradılmışa bir göz ile bakmayan
Halka müderris ise hakikatde âsîdur.”

CONCLUSION

The human-nature relationship has been a surprisingly important issue in the justification of human rights, the relationship between the individual and the state, and therefore in the development of today's political thought based on democracy and human rights. Because concepts such as "state of nature" and "natural law" were used in the grounding of individualism, liberalism and negative rights. In these two concepts, a period in which people lived an isolated pre-social life has been fictionalized. In this framework, the value, dignity, rights and freedoms of human (individual) were tried to be derived from the concept of "nature".

Of course, it is not correct to ignore the civil and social character of human in these approaches, and it is also wrong to consider human within the limits of natural-wild life. Because, when a person does not exceed the limits of natural life and cannot reach a civilized life and morality, he will cause great harm to the nature. His ambition and covetousness are not limited by his physiological structure, but there are spiritual, civil and moral values that limit him internally by his own will. Therefore, there is a strong need for a spirituality that instills a sense of self-dignity and directs him to act responsibly and sensitively, and makes him a moral subject.

While the human being is at the focal point in traditional thought and social sciences, in the secular ecologist approaches that have recently developed, human beings are devalued; nature becomes the goal. The most important problem of secular environmental movements is that approach, i.e. denying spiritual-civil aspect of human beings. Because the human being's perception of himself as an ordinary being in nature also renders his moral-civilian capacity dysfunctional. It makes it harmful and all-destructive.

Today, ecological doctrines have shifted to post humanism, as in "First Earth!" and "Deep Ecology". Post-humanism is actually correct as a critique of false humanism. However, post-humanism has turned

into an idea that produces new falsehoods. Because, it is against the human psychology to put forward the concept of "equivalence" which states that all living species have the same value against the "dignity of human"; and to put forward the concepts of "bio-centrism" or "nature-centrism" against "anthropocentrism". "Value-equivalence of all livings" cannot be spoken of by staying within the limits of nature. Human beings are selfish in their very nature. Self-sacrifice and altruism come not from their naturalness, but from their *fitrah* (innate spiritual character), religious feeling, morality. Every claimant who claims that man is equal to other living things thinks that this man is not himself, but the other, that is, the man who is excluded.

Various ecosystems are different expansions of Allah's infinite knowledge, power and wisdom. The entire nature is the signs (verses) of Allah and the evidences of the divine attributes. Therefore, ecology studies are like the commentaries of the names and attributes of Allah. In this context, nature also is a like book that describes its Creator in its own language. It is, metaphorically speaking, the book of creation that humans can perceive through their senses. As The Holy Koran, the book of creation also guide humans in self-awareness, giving meaning to life, and comprehending how human-nature relationships should be.

From the perspective of Allah's attribute of wisdom, everything in the universe has a purpose of existence. This belief in purposefulness emphasizes concepts such as moderation, proportionality, order, harmony, and function in nature. For humans to investigate the purpose of beings in the universe is a result brought by believing that Allah does not engage in purposeless actions; it is "*takhalluq*" by divine "*al-Hikmah*" attribute (acquiring a comprehensive morality according to the implications of the divine wisdom). Therefore, instead of seeking flaws and disorder in natural order, humans should always strive to explore the mysteries of the various ecosystems.

The essence of every being in nature is based on one or more of Allah's names. Since their existence is willed by Allah, they possess a value that precedes human evaluations and that need to be observed and respected from a theological perspective.

Life-bearing beings reflect divine attributes and names to a greater extent. Because Allah's names like "Hayy" (the Living), "al-Rahmān (the Most Merciful)", "al-Rahīm (the Most Compassionate)", "al-Wadūd (the Most Loving)" are manifested through life. Therefore, *biodiversity* holds a special value. The mentioning of a fly as evidence of Allah's power in the Qur'an is noteworthy in this regard.

Believing that the creator of atoms and quanta and the creator of galaxies is one and that he created the universe as an organism enables human to develop a holistic view of nature. It raises people's aesthetic sense, develops an optimistic view of life, a conception of civilization in harmony with the order in nature, and a sense of responsibility towards non-human beings as well as humans.

In this context, Islamic environmental ethics is a part of the same morality that establishes rights and duties of individuals towards their creator, their social environment, and their own selves based on faith. Because, the universe of meanings in the Quran addresses not only the relationship between human beings, the God, the universe, and society, but also addresses the relationships between humans and their natural environment. In all of these relationships, the Almighty Allah is both a "party (favoring the just)" and a "witness (a witness to everything, including intentions)". He is a third party in every case about these relationships, because rights come from Him and the legal norms is legislated by Him. When a person violates the rights of a human, he simultaneously transgresses the *huqūqullāh* (rights of God), and when he directly or indirectly harm people or other livings his relationship with the environment, he breach both *huqūqullāh* and *hudūdullāh* (the limits set by Allah). Therefore, showing respect for the divine will and rights of Allah prevents harm to both the human and nature.

In Islam, the order of "*Don't harm!*"¹ is tied to the concept of "العَدْلُ (justice)" which is the second fundamental principle following *tawhīd* (monotheism) and necessitates using things in accordance

¹ The prophet Muhammad (pbuh) says: " *There is no harm nor return of harm* (لَا ضَرَرَ وَلَا ضِرَارَ)". Ibn Mājah, "al-Ahkām", 33, 34.

with their nature. Because, the opposite of justice, which is "ظلم (persecution)", is defined as placing something in a place other than its proper place. In this sense, avoiding from persecution also encompasses using the entities in nature in a way that goes against their nature and their purposes of existence, thus disrupting the balance and order in nature.

Islam, in its broad sense, prohibits "إسراف (extravagance)". This prohibition entails moving away from excesses, unnecessary consumption, showy expenditures, and encourages a simple and balanced lifestyle, thus preventing environmental pollution. Islam's understanding of cleanliness also extends from avoiding information pollution to keeping living spaces clean. Therefore, a lifestyle that pollutes nature is neither ecological nor Islamic.

Finally, since environmental ethics in Islam is based on unchanging belief principles, it remains fundamentally unchanged, but it is updated according to the requirements of time. However, secular environment ethics, being of human origin, can be changed based on the conditions people are going through and the goals they set as solutions regarding the problems. Thus, various ethical perspectives exist, ranging from the understanding that considers humans as the measure of all things to the idea that the law of "that the weak and maladapted is died" that need to operate in society as well. The directives and maxims of these ethical thoughts have been set by ecologists to obtain certain consequences. Thus, they possess relative and instrumental attributes. Conversely, theistic belief requires the existence of universal moral principles directed by divine will, either directly or indirectly. If The Absolute Being exists, universal moral values and principles also exist. This moral framework is more determinant in guiding human behavior because someone who believes in God acknowledges that His commandments are unquestionably good and right. When theistic ethics also include rights of other beings in nature, it becomes an undeniable truth for believers that these beings are subjects of morality and that humans bear an one sided responsibility towards them.

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